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PABO
THE
PRIEST
BY
S. BARING
GOULD



1

Tom Hurrian

PABO THE PRIEST

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

IN THE ROAR OF THE SEA

THE QUEEN OF LOVE

URITH

CHEAP JACK ZITA

MRS. CURGENVEN OF CURGENVEN

ARMINELL

KITTY ALONE

MARGERY OF QUETHER

JACQUETTA

NOÉMI

THE BROOM-SQUIRE

DARTMOOR IDYLLS

THE PENNYCOMEQUICKS

GUAVAS THE TINNER

BLADYS

DOMITIA



PABO THE PRIEST

BY

S. BARING-GOULD

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PABO THE PRIEST

CHAPTER I

GERALD

KING HENRY sat in a great chair with a pillow under each arm, and one behind his head resting on the lofty chair-back. He was unwell, uncomfortable, irritable.

In a large wickerwork cage at the further end of the room was a porcupine. It had been sent him as a present by the King of Denmark.

Henry Beauclerk was fond of strange animals, and the princes that desired his favour humoured him by forwarding such beasts and birds as they considered to be rare and quaint.

The porcupine was a recent arrival, and it interested the King as a new toy, and drew his thoughts away from himself.

He had occasion to be irritable. His leech had ordered him to eat salt pork only.

By his hand, on the table, stood a ewer and a basin, and ever and anon Henry poured water out of the ewer into the basin, and then with a huge wooden spoon ladled the liquid back into the receiver. The reason of the proceeding was this—

He had for some time been troubled with some internal discomfort—not serious, but annoying; one which we, nowadays, would interpret very differently from the physicians of the twelfth century. We should say that he was suffering from dyspepsia; but the Court leech, who diagnosed the condition of the King, explained it in other fashion.

He said that Henry had inadvertently drunk water that contained the spawn of a salamander. It had taken many months for the spawn to develop into a sort of tadpole, and the tadpole to grow into a salamander. Thus the reptile had attained

large size, and was active, hungry, and rampageous. Beauclerk had a spotted salamander within him, which could not be extracted by a forceps, as it was out of reach ; it could not be poisoned, as that medicament which would kill the brute might also kill the King. It must, therefore, be cajoled to leave its prison. Unless this end were achieved, the son of the Conqueror of England would succumb to the ravages of this internal monster.

The recipe prescribed was simple, and commended itself to the meanest intelligence. Henry was to eat nothing but highly salted viands, and was to drink neither wine, water, nor ale. However severely he might suffer from thirst he could console himself with the reflection that the sufferings of the salamander within him were greater—a poor comfort, yet one that afforded a measure of relief to a man of a vindictive mind.

Not only was he to eat salt meat, but he was also to cause the splash of water to be heard in his insides. Therefore he was to pour water forwards and backwards between the ewer and the basin ; this was to be done with gaping

mouth, so that the sound might reach the reptile, and the salamander would at length be induced to ascend the throat of the monarch and make for the basin, so as to drink. Immediately on the intruder leaving the body of the King, Henry was to snap it up with a pair of tongs, laid ready to hand, and to cast it into the fire.

Although the season was summer and the weather was warm, there burned logs on the hearth, emitting a brisk blaze.

There were in the room in the palace of Westminster others besides the King and the imprisoned salamander. Henry had sent into South Wales for Gerald de Windsor and his wife Nest. These two were now in the chamber with the sick King.

"There, Nest," said he, "look at yon beast. Study it well. It is called a porcupine. Plinius asserts—I think it is Plinius—that when angered he sets all his quills in array and launches one at the eyes of such as threaten or assail him. Therefore, when I approach the cage, I carry a bolster before me as a buckler."

"Prithee, Sire, when thou didst go

against the Welsh last year, didst thou then as well wear a bolster?"

"Ah," said the King, "you allude to the arrow that was aimed at me, and which would have transfixed me but for my hauberk. That was shot by no Welshman."

"Then by whom?"

"Odds life, Nest, there be many who would prefer to have the light and lax hand of Robert over them than mine, which is heavy, and grips tightly."

"Then I counsel, when thou warrest against the Welsh, wear a pillow strapped behind as well as one before."

"Nest! Thy tongue is sharp as a spine of the porcupine. Get thee gone into the embrasure, and converse with the parrot there. Gerald and I have some words to say to each other, and when I have done with him, then I will speak with thee."

The lady withdrew into the window. She was a beautiful woman, known to be the most beautiful in Wales. She was the daughter of Rhys, King of Dyfed—that is, South Wales, and she had been surrendered when quite young as a hostage to Henry. He had respected neither her

youth nor her helpless position away from her natural protectors. Then he had thrust her on Gerald of Windsor, one of the Norman adventurers who were turned loose on Wales to be the oppressors, the plunderers, and the butchers of Nest's own people.

Nest had profuse golden hair, and a wonderful complexion of lilies and roses, that flashed, even flamed with emotion. Her eyes were large and deep, under dark brows, and with long, sable lashes that, when lowered, swept her cheeks and veiled her expressive eyes. She was tall and willowy, graceful in her every movement. In her eyes, usually tremulous and sad, there scintillated a lurking fire—threats of a blaze, should she be angered. When thrown into the arms of Gerald, her wishes had not been consulted. Henry had desired to be rid of her, as an encumbrance, as soon as he had resolved on marrying Mathilda, the heiress of the Saxon kings, daughter of Malcolm of Scotland, and niece to Edgar Etheling. At one time he had thought of conciliating the Welsh by making Nest his wife. Their hostility would cease when the

daughter of one of their princes sat on the English throne. But on further consideration, he deemed it more expedient for him to attach to him the English, and so rally about him a strong national party against the machinations of his elder brother, Robert. This concluded, he had disposed of Nest, hurriedly, to the Norman Gerald.

Meanwhile, her brother, Griffith, despoiled of his kingdom, a price set on his head, was an exile and a refugee at the Court of the King of Gwynedd, or North Wales, at Aberfraw in Anglesey.

"Come now, Gerald, what is thy report? How fares it with the pacification of Wales?"

"Pacification, Lord King! Do you call that pacifying a man when you thrash his naked body with a thorn-bush?"

"If you prefer the term—subjugation."

"The word suits. Sire, it was excellent policy, as we advanced, to fill in behind us with a colony of Flemings. The richest and fattest land has been cleared of the Welsh and given to foreigners. Moreover, by this means we have cut them off from access to the sea, from their

great harbours. It has made them mad. Snatch a meal from a dog, and he will snarl and bite. Now we must break their teeth and cut their claws. They are rolled back among their tangled forests and desolate mountains."

"And what advance has been made?"

"I have gone up the Towy and have established a castle at Carreg Cennen, that shall check Dynevor if need be."

"Why not occupy Dynevor, and build there?"

Gerald looked askance at his wife. The expression of his face said more than words. She was trifling with the bird, and appeared to pay no attention to what was being said.

"Hah! I perceive," spoke Henry, and chuckled.

Dynevor had been the palace in which Nest's father, the King of South Wales, had held court. It was from thence that her brother Griffith had been driven a fugitive to North Wales.

"In Carreg Cennen there is water—at Dynevor there is none," said Gerald, with unperturbed face.

"A good reason," laughed Henry, and

shifted the pillow behind his head. "Hey, there, Nest! employ thy energies in catching flies. Methinks were I to put a bluebottle in my mouth, the buzzing might attract the salamander, and I would catch him as he came after it." Then to Gerald, "Go on with thine account."

"I have nothing further to say—than this."

He put forth his hand and took a couple of fresh walnuts off a leaf that was on the table. Then, unbidden, he seated himself on a stool, with his back to the embrasure, facing the King. Next he cracked the shells in his fist, and cast the fragments into the fire. He proceeded leisurely to peel the kernels, then extended his palm to Henry, offering one, but holding his little and third finger over the other.

"I will have both," said Beauclerk.

"Nay, Sire, I am not going to crack all the nutshells, and you eat all the kernels."

"What mean you?"

"Hitherto I and other adventurers have risked our lives, and shed our blood in cracking the castles of these Welsh fellows, and now we want something

more, some of the flesh within. Nay, more. We ask you to help us. You have done nothing."

"I led an army into Wales last summer," said Henry angrily.

"And led it back again," retorted Windsor dryly. "Excuse my bluntness. That was of no advantage whatsoever to us in the south. Your forces were not engaged. It was a promenade through Powys. As for us in the south, we have looked for help and found none since your great father made a pilgrimage to St. David. Twice to Dewi is as good as once to Rome, so they say. He went once to look around him and to overawe those mountain wolves."

"What would you have done for you?" inquired Henry surlily.

"Not a great thing for you; for us—everything."

"And that?"

"At this moment a chance offers such as may not return again in our time. If what I propose be done, you drive a knife into the heart of the enemy, and that will be better than cutting off his fingers and toes and slicing away his ears. It will

not cost you much, Sire—not the risk of an arrow. Naught save the stroke of a pen.”

“Say what it is.”

“The Bishop of St. David’s is dead, a Welsh prelate, and the Church there has chosen another Welshman, Daniel, to succeed him. Give the See to an Englishman or a Norman, it matters not which—not a saint, but a fellow on whom you can rely to do your work and ours.”

“I see not how this will help you,” said Henry, with his eye on the hard face of Gerald, which was now becoming animated, so that the bronze cheek darkened.

“How this will help us!” echoed Windsor. “It will be sovereign as help. See you, Sire! We stud the land with castles, but we cannot be everywhere. The Welsh have a trick of gathering noiselessly in the woods and glens and drawing a ring about one of our strongholds, and letting no cry for assistance escape. Then they close in and put every Englishman therein to the sword—if they catch a Fleming, him they hang forthwith. We know not that a castle has been attacked and taken till we see the clouds

lit up with flame. When we are building, then our convoys are intercepted, our masons are harassed, our limekilns are destroyed, our cattle carried off, our horses houghed, and our men slaughtered."

"But what will a bishop avail you in such straits?"

"Attend! and you shall hear. A bishop who is one of ourselves and not a Welshman drains the produce of the land into English pockets. He will put an Englishman into every benefice, that in every parish we may have a spy on their actions, maintained by themselves. There is the joke of it. We will plant monasteries where we have no castles, and stuff them with Norman monks. A bishop will find excuses, I warrant you, for dispossessing the native clergy, and of putting our men into their berths. He will do more. He will throw such a net of Canon law over the laity as to entangle them inextricably in its meshes, and so enable us, without unnecessary bloodshed, to arrogate their lands to ourselves."

Henry laughed.

"Give us the right man. No saint with scruples."

"'Sdeath!" exclaimed the King; "I know the very man for you."

"And he is?"

"Bernard, the Queen's steward."

"He is not a clerk!"

"I can make him one."

"He is married!"

"He can cast off his wife — a big-mouthed jade. By my mother's soul, he will be glad to purchase a bishopric so cheap."

"He is no saint?"

"He has been steward to one," mocked Henry. "My Maude postures as a saint, gives large alms to needy clerks, washes the feet of beggars, endows monasteries, and grinds her tenants till they starve, break out into revolt, and have to be hung as an example. She lavishes coin on foreign flattering minstrels—and for that the poor English churl must be put in the press. It is Bernard, and ever Bernard, who has to turn the screw and add the weights and turn the grindstone."

"And he scruples not?"

"Has not a scruple in his conscience. He cheats his mistress of a third of what

he raises for her to lavish on the Church and the trumpeters of her fame."

"That is the man we require. Give us Bernard, and, Sire, you will do more to pacify Wales—pacify is your word—than if you sent us an army. Yet it must be effected speedily, before the Welsh get wind of it, or they will have their Daniel consecrated and installed before we shall be ready with our Bernard."

"It shall be accomplished at once—tomorrow. Go, Gerald, make inquiry what bishops are in the city, and send one or other hither. He shall priest him tomorrow, and Bernard shall be consecrated bishop the same day. Take him back with you. If you need men you shall have them. Enthroned him before they are aware. They have been given Urban at Llandaff, and, death of my soul! he has been belabouring his flock with his crook, and has shorn them so rudely that they are bleeding to death. There is Herve, another Norman we have thrust into St. Asaph, and, if I mistake not, his sheep have expelled their shepherd. So, to support Bernard, force will be required. Let him be well sustained."

“ I go,” said Gerald. “ When opposition is broken we shall eat our walnuts together, Sire.”

“ Ay—but Bernard will take the largest share.”

CHAPTER II

NEST

KING HENRY folded his hands over his paunch, leaned back and laughed heartily.

"'Sdeath!" said he. "But I believe the salamander has perished: he could not endure the mirth of it. Odds blood! But Bernard will be a veritable salamander in the rude bowels of Wales."

Before him stood Nest, with fire erupting from her dark eyes.

Henry looked at her, raised his brows, settled himself more easily in his chair, but cast aside the pillows on which his arms had rested. "Ha! Nest, I had forgotten thy presence. Hast caught me a bluebottle? My trouble is not so acute just now. How fares our boy, Robert?"

She swept the question aside with an angry gesture of the hand.

"And what sort of housekeeping do you have with Gerald?" he asked.

Again she made a movement of impatience.

"Odds life!" said he. "When here it was ever with thee Wales this, and Wales that. We had no mountains like thy Welsh Mynyddau—that is the silly word, is it not? And no trees like those in the Vale of Towy, and no waters that brawled and foamed like thy mountain brooks, and no music like the twanging of thy bardic harps, and no birds sang so sweet, and no flowers bloomed so fair. Pshaw! now thou art back among them all again. I have sent thee home—art content?"

"You have sent me back to blast and destroy my people. You have coupled my name with that of Gerald, that the curses of my dear people when they fall on him may fall on me also."

"Bah!" said the King. "Catch me a bluebottle, and do not talk in such high terms."

"Henry," she said, in thrilling tones, "I pray you——"

"You were for ever praying me at one

time to send you back to Wales. I have done so, and you are not content."

"I had rather a thousand times have buried my head—my shamed, my dishonoured head"—she spoke with sternness and concentrated wrath—"in some quiet cloister, than be sent back with a firebrand into my own land to lay its homesteads in ashes."

"You do pretty well among yourselves in that way," said Henry contemptuously. "When were you ever known to unite? You were for ever flying at each other's throats and wasting each other's lands. Those who cannot combine must be broken."

Nest drew a long breath. She knitted her hands together.

"Henry," she said, "I pray you, reconsider what Gerald has advised, and withhold consent."

"Nay, it was excellent counsel."

"It was the worst counsel that could be given. Think what has been done to my poor people. You have robbed them of their corn-land and have given it to aliens. You have taken from them their harbours, and they cannot escape. You have driven

away their princes, and they cannot unite. You have crushed out their independence, and they cease to be men. They have but one thing left to them as their very own—their Church. And now you will plunder them of that—thrust yourselves in between them and God. They have had hitherto their own pastors, as they have had their own princes. They have followed the one in war and the other in peace. Their pastors have been men of their own blood, of their own speech, men who have suffered with them, have wept with them, and have even bled with them. These have spoken to them when sick at heart, and have comforted them when wounded in spirit. And now they are to be jostled out of their places, to make room for others, aliens in blood, ignorant of our language, indifferent to our woes ; men who cannot advise nor comfort, men from whom our people will receive no gift, however holy. Deprived of everything that makes life endurable, will you now deprive them of their religion ? ”

She paused, out of breath, with flaming cheek, and sparkling eyes — quivering, palpitating in every part of her body.

"Nest," said the King, "you are a woman—a fool. You do not understand policy."

"Policy!" she cried scornfully. "What is policy? My people have their faults and their good qualities."

"Faults! I know them, I trow. As to their good qualities, I have them to learn." He shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

"You know their faults alone," pursued Nest passionately, "because you seek to find them that you may foster and trade on them. That is policy. Policy is to nurture the evil and ignore the good. None know better their own weaknesses than do we. But why not turn your policy to helping us to overcome them and be made strong?"

"It is through your own inbred faults that we have gained admission into your mountains. Brothers with you cannot trust brothers——"

"No more than you or Robert can trust each other, I presume," sneered Nest. "An arrow was aimed at you from behind. Who shot it? Not a Welshman, but Robert, or a henchman of Robert. On

my honour, you set us a rare example of fraternal affection and unity!"

Henry bit his lips.

"It is through your own rivalries that we are able to maintain our hold upon your mountains."

"And because we know you as fomenters of discord—doers of the devil's work—that is why we hate you. Give up this policy, and try another method with us."

"Women cannot understand. Have done!"

"Justice, they say, is figured as a woman; for Justice is pitiful towards feebleness and infirmity. But with you is no justice at all, only rank tyranny—tyranny that can but rule with the iron rod, and drive with the scourge."

"Be silent! My salamander is moving again."

But she would not listen to him. She pursued—

"My people are tender-hearted, loving, loyal, frank. Show them trust, consideration, regard, and they will meet you with open arms. We know now that our past has been one of defeat and recoil, and we

also know why it has been so. Divided up into our little kingdoms, full of rivalries, jealousies, ambitions, we have not had the wit to cohere. Who would weave us into one has made a rope of sand. It was that, not the superior courage or better arms of the Saxon, that drove us into the mountains and across the sea. It is through playing with, encouraging this, bribing into treachery, that you are forcing your way among us now. But if in place of calling over adventurers from France and boors from Flanders to kill us and occupy our lands, you come to us with the olive branch, and offer us your suzerainty and guarantee us against internecine strife—secure to us our lands, our laws, our liberties—then we shall become your devoted subjects, we shall look up to you as one who wishes to raise us, whereas now we regard you as one who casts us down to trample on us. We have our good qualities, and these qualities will serve you well if you will encourage them. But your policy is to do evil, and evil only.”

Henry Beauclerk, with a small mallet, struck a wooden disk, and an attendant appeared.



"Call Gerald Windsor back," said he ; then, to himself, "This woman is an offence to me."

"Because I utter that which you cannot understand. I speak of justice, and you understand only tyranny."

"Another word, Nest, and I shall have you forcibly removed."

She cast herself passionately at the King's feet.

"I beseech thee—I—I—whom thou didst so cruelly wrong when a poor helpless hostage in thy hands—I, away from father and mother—alone among you—not knowing a word of your tongue. I have never asked for aught before. By all the wrongs I have endured from thee—by thy hopes for pardon at the great Day when the oppressed and fatherless will be righted—I implore thee—withhold thy consent."

"It is idle to ask this," said Henry coldly. "Leave me. I will hear no more." Then taking the ewer, he began again to pour water into the basin, and next to ladle it back into the vessel whence he had poured it.

"Oh, you beau clerk!" exclaimed Nest,

rising to her feet. "So skilled in books, who knowest the qualities of the porcupine through Plinius, and how to draw forth a salamander, as instructed by Galen! A beau clerk, indeed, who does not understand the minds of men, nor read their hearts; who cannot understand their best feelings, whose only thought is that of the churl, to smash, and outrage, and ruin. A great people, a people with more genius in its little finger than all thy loutish Saxons in their entire body, thou wilt oppress, and turn their good to gall, their sweetness to sour, and nurture undying hate where thou mightest breed love."

"Begone! I will strike and summon assistance, and have thee removed."

"Then," said Nest, "I appeal unto God, that He may avenge the injured and the oppressed. May He smite thee where thou wilt most painfully feel the blow! May He break down all on which thou hast set thy hopes, and level with the dust that great ambition of thine!" She gasped. "Sire, when thou seest thy hopes wrecked and thyself standing a stripped and blasted tree—then remember Wales!"

CHAPTER III

THE SEVEN DEGREES

THE river Cothi, that after a lengthy course finally discharges into the Towy, so soon as it has quitted the solitudes of moor and mountain, traverses a broad and fertile basin that is a gathering-place of many feeders. From this basin it issues by a narrow glen, almost a ravine.

The sides of this great bowl are walled in by mountains, though not of the height, desolation, and grandeur of those to the north, where the Cothi takes its rise. The broad basin in the midst of the highlands, once probably occupied by a lake, is traversed near its head by the Sarn Helen, a paved Roman-British road, still in use, that connects the vales of the

Towy and the Teify, and passes the once famous gold-mines of Ogofau.

At the head of this oval trough or basin stand the church and village of Cynwyl Gaio, backed by mountains that rise rapidly, and are planted on a fork between the river Annell and a tributary, whose mingled waters eventually swell the Cothi.

The lower extremity of the trough is occupied by a rocky height, Pen-y-ddinas, crowned with prehistoric fortifications, and a little tarn of trifling extent is the sole relic of the great sheet of water which at one time, we may conjecture, covered the entire expanse.

At the time of this story, the district between the Towy and Teify, comprising the basin just described, constituted the sanctuary of David, and was the seat of an ecclesiastical tribe—that is to say, it was the residence of a people subject to a chief in sacred orders, the priest Pabo, and the hereditary chieftainship was in his family.

And this pleasant bowl among the mountains was also regarded as a sanctuary to which might fly such as had fallen into peril of life by manslaughter, or such

strangers as were everywhere else looked on with suspicion. A story was told, and transmitted from father to son, to account for this. It was to this effect. When St. David—or Dewi, as the Welsh called him—left the synod of Brefi, in the Teify Vale, he ascended the heights of the Craig Twrch, by Queen Helen's road, and on passing the brow, looked down for the first time on the fertile district bedded beneath him, engirdled by heathery mountains at the time in the flush of autumn flower. It was as though a crimson ribbon was drawn round the emerald bowl.

Then—so ran the tale—the spirit of prophecy came on the patriarch. His soul was lifted up within him, and raising his hands in benediction, he stood for a while as one entranced.

“Peace!” said he—and again, “Peace!” and once more, “Peace!” and he added, “May the deluge of blood never reach thee!”

Then he fell to sobbing, and bowed his head on his knees.

His disciples, Ismael and Aidan, said, “Father, tell us why thou weepest.”

But David answered, “I see what will

be. Till then may the peace of David rest on this fair spot."

Now, in memory of this, it was ordained that no blood should be spilled throughout the region ; and that such as feared for their lives could flee to it and be safe from pursuit, so long as they remained within the sanctuary bounds. And the bounds were indicated by crosses set up on the roads and at the head of every pass.

Consequently, the inhabitants of the Happy Valley knew that no Welsh prince would harry there, that no slaughters could take place there, no hostile forces invade the vale. There might ensue quarrels between residents in the Happy Land, personal disputes might wax keen ; but so great was the dread of incurring the wrath of Dewi, that such quarrels and disputes were always adjusted before reaching extremities.

And this immunity from violence had brought upon the inhabitants great prosperity. Such was a consequence of the benediction pronounced by old Father David.

It was no wonder, therefore, that the inhabitants of the region looked to him

with peculiar reverence and almost fanatical love. Just as in Tibet the Grand Lama never dies, for when one religious chief pays the debt of nature, his spirit undergoes a new incarnation, so—or almost so—was each successive Bishop of St. David's regarded as the representative of the first great father, as invested with all his rights, authority, and sanctity, as having a just and inalienable claim on their hearts and on their allegiance.

But now a blow had fallen on the community that was staggering. On the death of their Bishop Griffith, the Church of St. David had chosen as his successor Daniel, son of the former bishop, Sulien; but the Normans had closed all avenues of egress from the peninsula, so that he might not be consecrated, unless he would consent to swear allegiance to the See of Canterbury and submission to the crown of England, and this was doggedly resisted.

Menevia—another name for the St. David's headland—had undergone many vicissitudes. The church had been burnt by Danes, and its bishop and clergy massacred, but it had risen from its ruins, and a new successor in spirit, in blood, in

tongue, had filled the gap. Now—suddenly, wholly unexpectedly, arrived Bernard, a Norman, who could not speak a word of Welsh, and mumbled but broken English, a man who had been hurried into Orders, the priesthood and episcopal office, all in one day, and was thrust on the Welsh by the mere will of the English King, in opposition to Canon law, common decency, and without the consent of the diocese.

The ferment throughout South Wales was immense. Resentment flamed in some hearts, others were quelled with despair. It was not the clergy alone who were in consternation : all, of every class, felt that their national rights had been invaded, and that in some way they could not understand this appointment was a prelude to a great disaster.

Although there had been dissensions among the princes, and strife between tribes, the Church, their religion, had been the one bond of union. There was a cessation of all discord across the sacred threshold, and clergy and people were intimately united in feeling, in interests, in belief. In the Celtic Church bishops and

priests had always been allowed to marry—a prelate of St. David's had frankly erected a monument to the memory of two of his sons, which is still to be seen there. Everywhere the parochial clergy, if parochial they can be styled, where territorial limits were not defied, had their wives. They were consequently woven into one with the people by the ties of blood.

Nowhere was the feeling of bitterness more poignant than in the Happy Valley, where the intrusion of a stranger to the throne of David was resented almost as a sacrilege. Deep in the hearts of the people lay the resolve not to recognise the new bishop as a spiritual father, one of the ecclesiastical lineage of Dewi.

Such was the condition of affairs, such the temper of the people, when it was announced that Bernard was coming to visit the sanctuary and there to initiate the correction of abuses.

Pabo, the Archpriest, showed less alarm than his flock. When he heard that threats were whispered, that there was talk of resistance to the intrusion, he went about among his people exhorting, persuading against violence. Let Bernard

be received with the courtesy due to a visitor, and the respect which his office deserved.

A good many protested that they would not appear at Cynwyl lest their presence should be construed as a recognition of his claim, and they betook themselves to their mountain pastures, or remained at home. Nevertheless, moved by curiosity, a considerable number of men did gather on the ridge, about the church, watching the approach of the bishop and his party. Women also were there in numbers, children as well, only eager to see the sight. The men were gloomy, silent, and wore their cloaks, beneath which they carried cudgels.

The day was bright, and the sun flashed on the weapons and on the armour of the harnessed men who were in the retinue of Bishop Bernard, that entered the valley by Queen Helen's road, and advanced leisurely towards the ridge occupied by the church and the hovels that constituted the village.

The Welsh were never—they are not to this day—builders. Every fair structure of stone in the country is due to the

constructive genius of the Normans. The native Celt loved to build of wood and wattle. His churches, his domestic dwellings, his monasteries, his kingly halls, all were of timber.

The tribesmen of Pabo stood in silence, observing the advancing procession.

First came a couple of clerks, and after them two men-at-arms, then rode Bernard, attended on one side by his interpreter, on the other by his brother Rogier in full harness. Again clerks, and then a body of men-at-arms.

The bishop was a middle-sized man with sandy hair, very pale eyes with rings about the iris deeper in colour than the iris itself—eyes that seemed without depth, impossible to sound, as those of a bird. He had narrow, straw-coloured brows, a sharp, straight peak of a nose, and thin lips—lips that hardly showed at all—his mouth resembling a slit. The chin and jowl were strongly marked.

He wore on his head a cloth cap with two peaks, ending in tassels, and with flaps to cover his ears, possibly as an imitation of a mitre ; but outside a church, and engaged in no sacred function, he was of

course not vested. He had a purple-edged mantle over one shoulder, and beneath it a dark cassock, and he was booted and spurred. One of the clerks who preceded him carried his pastoral cross—for the See of St. David's claimed archiepiscopal pre-eminence. In the midst of the men-at-arms were sumpter mules carrying the ecclesiastical purtenances of the bishop.

Not a cheer greeted Bernard as he reached the summit of the hill and was in the midst of the people. He looked about with his pale, inanimate eyes, and saw sulky faces and folded arms.

"Hey!" said he to his interpreter. "Yon fellow—he is the Archpriest, I doubt not. Bid him come to me."

"I am at your service," said Pabo in Norman-French, which he had acquired.

"That is well; hold my stirrup whilst I alight."

Pabo hesitated a moment, then complied.

"The guest," said he, "must be honoured."

But an angry murmur passed through the throng of bystanders.

"You have a churlish set of parish-

ioners," said Bernard, alighting. "They must be taught good manners. Go, fetch me a seat."

Pabo went to the presbytery, and returned with a stool, that he placed where indicated by the bishop.

The people looked at each other with undisguised dissatisfaction. They did not approve of their chief holding the stirrup, carrying a stool for this foreign intruder. Their isolation in the midst of their mountains, their immunity from war and ravage, had made them tenacious of their liberties, and proud, resistful to innovation, and resolute in the maintenance of their dignity and that of their chief. But a certain amount of concession was due to hospitality, and only so construed could these acts be tolerated. Nevertheless their tempers were chafed, and there was no graciousness in the demeanour of the bishop to allay suspicion, while the contemptuous looks of his Norman attendants were calculated to exasperate.

"It is well," said Bernard, signing imperiously to Pabo to draw near. "It is well that you can speak French."

"I have been in Brittany. I have

visited Nantes and Rennes. I can speak your language after a fashion."

"'Tis well. I am among jabbering jackdaws, and cannot comprehend a word of their jargon. I do not desire to distort my mouth in the attempt to acquire it."

"Then would it not have been as well had you remained in Normandy or England?"

"I have other work to do than to study your tongue," said Bernard, with a laugh. "I am sent here by my august master, the fine clerk, the great scholar, the puissant prince, to bring order where is confusion."

"The aspect of this valley bespeaks confusion," interrupted Pabo, with a curl of the lip.

"Do not break in on me with unmannered words," said the bishop. "I am an apostle of morality where reigns mere license."

"License, my *Sieur*! I know my people; I have lived among them from childhood. They are not perfect. They may not be saints, but I cannot admit that a stranger who is newly come among

us, who cannot understand a word that we speak, is justified in thus condemning us."

"We shall see that presently," exclaimed Bernard, "when we come to particulars. I have heard concerning you. My lord and master, the Beauclerk Henry, has his eyes and ears open. Ye are a dissolute set, ye do not observe the Seven Degrees." Then aside to his chaplain: "It is seven, not four, I think?"

"I pray you explain," said Pabo.

"Seven degrees," pursued Bernard. "I must have all the relationships of the married men throughout the country gone into. This district of Caio to commence with, then to go on through the South of Wales—through my diocese. I must have all inquired into; and if any man shall have contracted an union within the forbidden degrees, if he have taken to him a wife related by blood—consanguine, that is the word, chaplain, eh?—or connected by marriage, affine—am I right, chaplain?—or having contracted a spiritual relationship through sponsorship at the font, or legal relation through guardianship—then such marriages must be annulled, made

void, and the issue pronounced to be illegitimate."

"My good Lord!" gasped Pabo, turning deadly pale.

"Understand me," went on the bishop, turning his bleary, ringed, bird-like eyes about on the circle of those present, "if it shall chance that persons have stood at the font to a child, then they have thereby contracted a spiritual affinity—I am right, am I not, chaplain?—which acts as a barrier to marriage; and, if they have become united, bastardises their issue. Cousinship by blood, relationship through marriage, all act in the same way to seven degrees—and render unions void."

"Are you aware what you are about?" asked Pabo gravely. "In our land, hemmed in by mountains, marriages are usually contracted within the same tribe, and in the same district, so that the whole of our people are more or less bound together into a family. A kinship of some sort subsists between all. If you press this rule—and it is no rule with us—you break up fully three-fourths of the families in this country."

"And what if I do?"

"What! Separate husband and wife!"

"If the union has been unlawful."

"It has not been unlawful. Cousins have always among us been allowed to marry. No nearer blood relations; and the rule of affinity has never extended beyond a wife's sister. As to spiritual relationship as a bar, it is a device of man. Why! to inquire into such matters is to pry into every family, to introduce trouble into consciences, to offer opportunity for all kinds of license."

"I care not. It is our Roman Canon law."

"But we are not, we never have been, subject to your Roman Canon law."

"You are so now. I, your head, have taken oath of allegiance to Canterbury. Thereby I have bound you all through Augustine to the chair of Peter."

Pabo's cheek darkened.

"I rely on you," proceeded the bishop.

"You, as you say, have lived here always. You can furnish me with particulars as to all the marriages that have been contracted for the last fifty years."

"What! does the rule act retrospectively?"

"Ay. What is unlawful now was unlawful always."

"I will not give up—betray my people."

"You will be obedient to your bishop!"

Pabo bit his lip and looked down.

"This will entail a good deal of shifting of lands from hand to hand, when sons discover that their fathers' wedlock was unlawful, and that they are not qualified to inherit aught."

"You will cause incalculable evil!"

The bishop shrugged his shoulders.

"Lead on to the church," said he.

"My chaplain, who is interpreter as well, shall read my decree to your people—in Latin first and then in Welsh. By the beard of Wilgefortis! if you are obstructive, Archpriest, I know how to call down lightning to fall on you."

CHAPTER IV

A HWYL

A WELSH church at the period of the Norman Conquest was much what it had been from the time when Christianity had been adopted by the Britons. It was of wood, as has been already stated.

The insular Celt could never apply himself to the quarrying and shaping of stone.

The church of Cynwyl was oblong, built of split logs, roofed with thatch. The eaves projected, so as to shelter the narrow windows from the drift of rain, as these latter were unglazed. Only in the chancel were they protected by sheep's amnion stretched on frames.

A gallows of timber standing at a short distance from the west end supported the bell. This was neither circular nor cast,

but was oblong in shape, of hammered metal, and riveted. The tone emitted was shrill and harsh, but perhaps was on this account better suited to be heard at a distance than had it been deep in tone and musical in note.

Rude although the exterior of the church was, the interior was by no means deficient in beauty, but this beauty was limited to, or at least concentrated on, the screen that divided the long hall into two portions. There were no aisles, the only division into parts was effected by this screen, that was pierced by a doorway in the middle.

This screen was, indeed, constructed of wood in compartments, and each compartment was filled with an intricate and varied tracery of plaited willow wands. It was the glory and the delight of the Celt to expend his artistic effort on the devising and carrying out of some original design in interlaced work—his knots and twists and lattice were of incomparable beauty and originality. If he took to carving on stone, it was to reproduce on the least tractable material his delightful lace-work of osiers.

The patterns of the compartments were not merely varied in plaits, but colour was skilfully introduced by the flexible rods having been dyed by herbs or lichens, and a further variety was introduced by the partial peeling of some of the wands in rings. Moreover, to heighten the effect, in places flat pieces of wood like shuttles, but with dragons' heads carved on them, were introduced among the plait as a means of breaking continuity in design and allowing of a fresh departure in pattern.

Within the screen a couple of oil-lamps burned, rendered necessary by the dusk there produced by the membrane that covered the windows. Here, beneath the altar, was preserved the abbatial staff of the founder—a staff invested by popular belief with miraculous powers.

On the last day of November every year this staff was solemnly brought forth and carried up the river Annell, to a point where rested an enormous boulder, fallen from the mountain crag, and resting beside the stream, where it glanced and frothed over a slide of rock, in which were depressions scooped by the water, but supersti-

tiously held to have been worn by the Apostle of Caio as he knelt in the water at his prayers and recitation of the Psalter. Here the Archpriest halted, and with the staff stirred the water. It was held that by this means the Annell was assured to convey health and prosperity to the basin of the Cothi, into which it discharged its blessed waters. Hither were driven flocks and herds to have the crystal liquid scooped from the hollows in the rock, and sprinkled over them, as an effectual preservative against murrain.

- The bishop occupied a stool within the screen. On this occasion he had nothing further to do than proclaim his inflexible determination to maintain the prohibition of marriage within the seven degrees for the future, and to annul all such unions as fell within them, whether naturally or artificially, and to illegitimatisé all children the issue of such marriages. It was the object of the Norman invaders to sow the seed of discord among those whose land they coveted, to produce such confusion in the transmission of estates as to enable them to intervene and dispossess the native owners, not always at the point of the

sword, but also with the quill of the clerk.

The villagers had crowded into the sacred building; they stood or knelt as densely as they could be packed, and through the open door could be seen faces thronging to hear such words as might reach them without. Every face wore an expression of suspicion, alarm, or resentment. Pabo stood outside the screen upon a raised step or platform, whence he was wont to read to or address his congregation. It sustained a desk, on which reposed the Scriptures.

The bishop's chaplain occupied the centre of the doorway through the screen. He held a parchment in his hand, and he hastily read its contents in Latin first, and then translated it into Welsh. Pabo was a tall man, with dark hair and large deep eyes, soft as those of an ox, yet capable of flashing fire. He was not over thirty-five years of age, yet looked older, as there were gravity and intensity in his face beyond his years. He was habited in a long woollen garment dyed almost but not wholly black. He was hearkening to every word that fell, his eyes fixed on

the ground, his hands clenched, his lips closed, lines forming in his face.

It escaped Bernard, behind the lattice-work, and incapable of observing such phenomena, how integrally one, as a single body, the tribesmen present were with their ecclesiastical and political chieftain. Their eyes were riveted, not on the reader, but on the face of Pabo. The least change in his expression, a contraction of the brow, a quiver of the lip, a flush on the cheek, repeated itself in every face.

Whilst the lection in Latin proceeded, the people could understand no more of it than what might be discerned from its effect on their Archpriest ; but it was other when the chaplain rendered it into everyday vernacular. Yet even then they did not look to his lips. They heard his words, but read the commentary on them in the face of Pabo.

They understood now with what they were menaced. It was shown to them, not obscurely. They knew as the allocution proceeded what it involved if carried out : there were wives present whose sentence of expulsion from their homes

was pronounced, children who were bastardised and disinherited, husbands whose dearest ties were to be torn and snapped.

Not a sound was to be heard save the drone of the reader's voice ; till suddenly there came a gasp of pain—then a sob.

Again an awful hush. Men set their teeth and their brows contracted ; the muscles of their faces became knotted. Women held their palms to their mouths. Appealing hands were stretched to Pabo, but he did not stir.

Then, when the translation was ended, the chaplain looked round in silence to Bernard, who made a sign with his hand and nodded.

In a loud and strident voice the chaplain proceeded : “ By order of Bernard, by the grace of God, and the favour of his Majesty the King, Bishop of St. David's and Primate of all Wales—all such as have contracted these unlawful unions shall be required within ten days from this present to separate from the women with whom they have lived as husbands, and shall not occupy the same house with them, nor eat at the same board, under

pain of excommunication. And it is further decreed that in the event of contumacy, of delay in fulfilling what is hereby required, or refusal to fulfil these lawful commands, after warning, such contumacious person shall forfeit all his possessions, whether in lands or in movable goods, or cattle—his wearing apparel alone excepted; and such possessions shall be divided into three equal portions, whereof one-third shall be confiscated to the Crown, one-third shall fall to the Church Metropolitan, and, again, one-third——” He raised his head. Then Bernard moved forward in his seat that he might fix his eyes upon Pabo; there was a lifting of his upper lip on one side, as he signed to the chaplain to proceed: “And, again, one-third shall be adjudged as a grace to the Informer.” A moan swept through the congregation like that which precedes the breaking of a storm. “To the Informer,” repeated the chaplain, “who shall denounce to the Lord Bishop such unions as have been effected in this district of Caio within the forbidden degrees.”

This last shaft pierced deepest of all.

It invited, it encouraged treachery It cast everywhere, into every family, the sparks that would cause conflagration. It was calculated to dissolve all friendships, to breed mistrust in every heart.

Then Pabo lifted his head.

His face was wet as though he had been weeping, but the drops that ran over his cheeks fell, not from his glowing eyes, but from his sweat-beaded brow.

He turned back the book that was on the desk and opened it. He said no words of his own, but proceeded to read from the volume in a deep voice, vibrating with emotion; and those who heard him thrilled at his tones.

"Thus saith the Lord God. Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle. Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle——"

"What doth he say? What readeth he?" asked the bishop of his chaplain, whom he had beckoned to him.

Pabo heard his words, turned about and said, "I am reading the oracle of God. Is that forbidden?" A woman in the congregation cried out; another burst into sobs.

Pabo resumed the lection, and his voice unconsciously rose and fell in a musical wail: "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them." At once—like a rising song, a mounting wave of sound—came the voice of the people as they caught the words that rang in their hearts; they caught and repeated the words of the reader after him—"One shepherd, and he shall feed them." And as they recited in swelling and falling tones, they moved rhythmically, with swaying bodies and raised and balanced arms. It was an electric, a marvellous quiver of a common emotion that passed through the entire congregation. It went further—it touched and vibrated through those outside, near the door—it went further, it affected those beyond, who knew not what was said.

Pabo continued—and his voice rolled as if in a chant—"I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—even my servant DAVID."

“David! He shall feed us—even he, our father—our father David!”

Those kneeling started to their feet, stretched their arms to heaven. Their tears poured forth like rain, their voices, though broken by sobs, swelled into a mighty volume of sound, thrilling with the intensity of their distress, their hope, their fervour of faith—“Even he shall come—God’s servant David!” At the name, the loved name, they broke into an ecstatic cry, “And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it.”¹ The chaplain translated. “He is uttering treason!” shouted Bernard, starting up. “David a prince among them We have no King but Henry.”

Then from without came cries, shouts, a rushing of feet, an angry roar, and the clash of weapons.

¹A minnau yr Arglwydd a fyddaf yn Dduw iddynt, a’m gwas Dafydd yn dywysog yn eu mysg; myfi yr Arglwydd a leferais hyn.—Ez. xxxiv. 24.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST BLOOD

“**W**HAT is this uproar? What is being done?” asked Bernard, in agitation. “Look, Cadell! Is there no second door to this trap? Should violence be attempted I can obtain no egress by the way I came in; this church is stuffed with people. Shut the screen gates if they show the least indication of attacking us. 'Sdeath! if it should occur to them to fire this place——”

“They will not do so, on account of their own people that are in it.”

“But—but what is the occasion of this noise? How is it I am here without any one to protect me? This should have been looked to. I am not safe among these savages. It is an accursed bit of negligence that shall be inquired into.

What avails me having men-at-arms if they do not protect me? Body of my life! Am not I the King's emissary? Am not I a bishop? Am I to be held so cheap even by my own men that I am allowed to run the risk of being torn to pieces, or smoked out of a hole like this?"

"Do not fear, my Lord Bishop," said Cadell, his chaplain and interpreter, who was himself quaking, "there is a door behind, in the chancel wall. But methinks the danger is without; there is the disturbance, and the congregation are pressing to get forth."

"Body of my life! I want to know what is happening. Here, quick, you clumsy ass, you beggarly Welshman; Cadell, undo the clasp, the brooch; I will have off this cope—and remove my mitre. I will leave them here. I shall be less conspicuous, if weapons are being flourished and stones are flying."

The bishop speedily divested himself of his ecclesiastical attire, all the while scolding, cursing his attendant, who was 'a Welshman by birth, but who had passed into the service of the conquerors, and knew very well that this would advance

him in wealth, and ensure for himself a fat benefice.

When the bishop had been freed of his vestments, the chaplain unbolted a small side door, and both emerged from the church.

Outside all was in commotion. The populace was surging to and fro, uttering cries and shouts. An attack had been made on the military guard of the bishop—and these, for their mutual protection, had retreated to the sumpter horses and mules, surrounded them, and faced their assailants with swords brandished. About them, dense and menacing, were the Welshmen of Caio, flourishing cudgels and poles, and the women urging them on with cries.

Bernard found himself separated from his party by the dense ring of armed peasants, infuriated by the wrongs they had endured and by the appeals of the women. He could not see his men, save that now and then the sun flashed on their swords as they were whirled above the heads of the crowd. No blood seemed to have been shed as yet—the Normans stood at bay. The Welsh peasants were

reluctant to approach too nearly to the terrible blades that gleamed like lightning.

At the same instant that Bernard issued from the church, the bell suspended between two beams was violently swung, and its clangour rang out above the noise of the crowd. As if in answer to its summons, from every side poured natives, who had apparently been holding themselves in reserve ; they were armed with scythes, axes, and ox-goads. Some were in leather jerkins that would resist a sword-cut or a pike-thrust, but the majority were in thick wadmel. The congregation were also issuing from the west door of the church, thick on each other's heels, and were vainly asking the occasion of the disturbance.

It was some minutes before Pabo emerged into the open, and then it was through the side door. He found the bishop there, livid, every muscle of his face jerking with terror, vainly endeavouring to force his chaplain to stand in front of and screen him.

"I hold you answerable for my safety," said Bernard, putting forth a trembling hand and plucking at the Archpriest.

"And I for mine," cried the chaplain.

"Have no fear—none shall touch you," answered Pabo, addressing the prelate. He disdained even to look at the interpreter.

"If any harm come to my men, you shall be held accountable. They are King Henry's men; he lent them to me. He sent them to guard my sacred person."

"And mine," said Cadell. "Our father in God cannot make himself understood without me."

"You are in no danger," said Pabo.

Then the Archpriest stepped forward, went to the belfry, and disengaged the rope from the hand of him who was jangling the bell. With a loud, deep, sonorous voice, he called in their native tongue to his tribesmen to be silent, to cease from aggression, and to explain the cause of the tumult.

He was obeyed immediately. All noise ceased, saved that caused by the Normans, who continued to thunder menaces:

"Silence them also," said Pabo to the bishop.

"I—I have lost my voice," said the frightened prelate.

At the same moment the crowd parted,

and a band of sturdy peasants, carrying clubs, and one armed with a coultter, came forward, drawing with them Rogier, the bishop's brother, and a young and beautiful woman with dishevelled hair and torn garments. Her wrists had been bound behind her back, but one of the men who drew her along with a great knife cut the thongs, and she shook the fragments from her and extended her freed arms to the priest.

"Pabo!"

"Morwen!" he exclaimed, recoiling in dismay.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded the bishop. "Unhand my brother, ye saucy curs!" But, though his meaning might be guessed by those who gripped Rogier, they could not understand his words.

"What is the cause of this?" asked Bernard, addressing the Norman. "Rogier, how comes this about?"

The Norman was spluttering with rage, and writhing in vain endeavour to extricate himself from the men who held him. It was apparent to Bernard that the right arm of the man had received some injury,

as he was powerless to employ it against his captors. The rest of the soldiery were hemmed in and unable to go to his assistance.

"Curse the hounds!" he yelled. "They have struck me over the shoulder with their bludgeons, or by the soul of Rollo I would have sent some of them to hell! What are my men about that they do not attempt to release me?" he shouted. But through the ring of stout weapons—a quadruple living hedge—his followers were unable to pass; moreover, all considered their own safety to consist in keeping together.

"What has caused this uproar?" asked the bishop. "Did they attack you without provocation?"

"By the soul of the conqueror!" roared Rogier. "Cannot a man look at and kiss a pretty woman without these swine resenting it? Have not I a right to carry her off if it please me to grace her with my favour? Must these hogs interfere?"

"Brother, you have been indiscreet!"

"Not before your face, Bernard. I know better than that. I know what is due to your sanctity of a few weeks. I

waited like a decent Christian till your back was turned. You need have known nothing about it. And if, as we rode away, there was a woman behind my knave on his horse, you would have shut one eye. But these mongrels—these swine—resent it. Body of my life! Resent it!—an honour conferred on one of their girls if a Norman condescend to look with favour on her. Did not our gracious King Henry set us the example with a Welsh prince's wench? And shall not we follow suit?"

"You are a fool, Rogier—at such a time, and so as to compromise me?"

"Who is to take you to task, brother?"

"I mean not that, but to risk my safety. To leave me unprotected in the church, and to provoke a brawl without, that might have produced serious consequences to me. Odd's life! Where is that Cadell? Slinking away?"

"My lord, I have greater cause to fear than yourself. They bear me bitterest hate."

"I care not. Speak for me to these curs. Bid them unhand my brother. They have maimed him—maybe broken his arm.

My brother, a Norman, held as a common felon by these despicable serfs!"

"Bishop," said Pabo, stepping before Bernard.

"What have you to say?" asked the prelate sullenly.

The face of the Archpriest was stern and set, as though chiselled out of alabaster.

"Are you aware what has been attempted while you were in God's house? What the outrage is that has been offered?"

"I know that my brother has been so light as to cast his eye on one of your Welsh wenches."

"Lord Bishop," said Pabo, in hard tones, and the sound of his voice was metallic as the bell, "he has insulted this noble woman. He bound her hands behind her back and has endeavoured to force her on to a horse in spite of her resistance, her struggles—look at her bruised and bleeding arms!—and to carry her away."

"Well, well, soldiers are not clerks and milksops."

"Do you know who she is?"

"I know not. Some saucy lass who ogled him, and he took her winks as an invitation."

"Sieur!" thundered Pabo, and the veins in his brow turned black. "She is the noblest, purest of women."

"Among broken sherds, a cracked pitcher is precious."

"Bishop, she is my wife!"

"Your wife!" jeered Bernard, leaned back, placed his hands to his side, and laughed. "Priests have no wives; you mean your harlot."

In a moment the bishop was staggering back, and would have fallen unless he had had the timber wall of the church to sustain him. In a moment, maddened beyond endurance by the outrage, by the words, by the demeanour of the prelate, in forgetfulness of the sacred office of the man who insulted him, in forgetfulness of his own sacred office, forgetful of everything save the slur cast on the one dearest to him in the whole world, the one to whom he looked with a reverence which from her extended to all womanhood, the incandescent Welsh blood in his veins burst into sudden flame, and he struck Bernard in the face, on the mouth that had slandered her and insulted him. And the bishop reeled back and stood speechless,

with blear eyes fixed, his hands extended against the split logs, and from his lips, cut with his teeth, blood was flowing.

Then, in the dead silence that ensued, an old hermit, clothed in sackcloth, bare-headed, with long, matted white hair, walking bent by the aid of a staff—a man who for thirty years had occupied a cell on the mountain-side without leaving it—stood forward before all, an unwonted apparition; and slowly, painfully raising his distorted form, he lifted hand and staff to heaven, and cried: “Woe, woe, to the Blessed Valley! The peace of David, our father, is broken. Blood has flowed in strife. That cometh which he foresaw, and over which he wept. Woe! woe! woe!”

CHAPTER VI

THE SCROLL

THE young, the thoughtless, were full of exultation over the rebuff that the Normans, with their bishop, had encountered, but the older and wiser men were grave and concerned. The Normans had indeed withdrawn in sullen resentment, outnumbered, and incapable of revenging on the spot and at once the disabled arm of their leader and the broken tooth of their prelate. The old men knew very well that matters would not rest thus ; and they feared lest the events of that day when the party of foreigners penetrated to the Blessed Valley might prove the most fruitful in disastrous consequences it had ever seen.

Native princes had respected the sanctuary of David, but an English King and

foreign adventurers were not likely to regard its privileges, nor fear the wrath of the saint who had hitherto rendered it inviolable. Bishop Bernard had at his back not only the whole spiritual force of the Latin Church, the most highly concentrated and practically organised in Christendom, but he was specially the emissary of the English King, with all the physical power of the realm to support him; and what was the prospect of a little green basin in the mountains, isolated from the world, occupied by three thousand people, belonging to the most loosely compacted Church that existed, with no political force to maintain its right and champion its independence—what chance had the sanctuary of David in Caio against the resentment of the English King and the Roman Church? Neither, as experience showed, was likely to pass over an affront. One would sustain the other in exacting a severe chastisement.

The hermit, who after over thirty years of retirement in one cell, far up the Mount Mallaen, had suddenly, and unsolicited, left his retreat to appear once more among his fellow-men, and then to pronounce a

sentence of woe, had sunk exhausted after this supreme effort of expiring powers, and had been removed into the Archpriest's house, where he was ministered to by Morwen, Pabo's wife.

The old man lay as one in a trance, and speechless. His eyes were open, but he saw nothing on earth, and no efforts could induce him to take nourishment. With folded hands, muttering lips, and glazed eyes he continued for several days. Pabo and his wife looked on with reverence, not knowing whether he were talking with invisible beings which he saw. He answered no questions put to him; he seemed not to hear them, and he hardly stirred from the position which he had assumed when laid on a bed in the house.

The hermit of Mallaen had been regarded with unbounded reverence throughout the country. He had been visited for counsel, his words had been esteemed oracular, and he was even credited with having performed miraculous cures.

That he was dying in their midst would have created greater attention and much excitement among the people of Caio at any other time, but now they were in a

fever over the events of the bishop's visit, their alarm over the enforcing of the decree on marriages, and their expectation of punishment for the rough handling of their unwelcome visitors; and when one night the old hermit passed away, it was hardly noticed, and Morwen was left almost unassisted to pay the last duties to the dead, to place the plate of salt on his breast when laid out, and to light the candles at the head.

It was no holiday-time, and yet little work was done throughout the once happy valley. A cloud seemed to hang over it, and oppress all therein. Shepherds on the mountain drove their flocks together, that for awhile, sitting under a rock or leaning on their crooks, they might discuss what was past and form conjectures as to the future. Women, over their spinning, drew near each other, and in low voices and with anxious faces conversed as to the unions that were like to be dissolved. Men met in groups and passed opinions as to what steps should be taken to maintain their rights, their independence, and to ward off reprisals. Even children caught up the words that were whispered, and

jeered each other as born out of legitimate wedlock, or asked one another who were their sponsors, and shouted that such could never intermarry.

So days passed. Spirits became no lighter; the gloom deepened. It was mooted who would tell of the relationships borne by those who were now contented couples—so as to enable the bishop to separate them. Who would seek selfish profit by betrayal of their own kin?

The delay was not due to pitiful forbearance, to Christian forgiveness; it boded preparation for dealing an overwhelming blow. The Welsh Prince or King was a fugitive. From him no help could be expected. His castle of Dynevor was in the hands of the enemy. To the south, the Normans blocked the exit of the Cothi from its contracted mouth; to east, the Towy valley was in the hands of the oppressor, planted in impregnable fortresses; to the west, Teify valley was in like manner occupied. Only to the north, among the wild, tumbled, barren mountains, was there no contracting, strangling, steel hand.

The autumn was closing in. The cattle

that had summered in the *hafod* (the mountain byre) were returning to the *hendre* (the winter home). Usually the descent from the uplands was attended with song and laugh and dancing. It was not so now. And the very cattle seemed to perceive that they did not receive their wonted welcome.

Pabo went about as usual, but graver, paler than formerly—for his mind was ill at ease. It was he who had shed the first blood. A trifling spill, indeed, but one likely to entail serious results. The situation had been aggravated by his act. He who should have done his utmost to ward off evil from his flock had perpetrated an act certain to provoke deadly resentment against them. He bitterly regretted his passionate outbreak ; he who should have set an example of self-control had failed. Yet when he looked on his wife, her gentle, patient face, the tenderness with which she watched and cared for the dying hermit, again his cheek flushed, the veins in his brow swelled, and the blood surged in his heart. To hear her insulted he could never bear ; should such an outrage be repeated, he would strike again.

Pabo sat by his fire. In Welsh houses even so late as the twelfth century there were no structural chimneys—these were first introduced by the Flemish settlers—consequently the smoke from the wood fire curled and hung in the roof and stole out, when tired of circling there, through a hole in the thatch.

On a bier lay the dead man, with candles at his head — his white face illumined by the light that descended from the gap in the roof. At the feet crouched a woman, a professional wailer, singing and swaying herself, as she improvised verses in honour of the dead, promised him the glories of Paradise, and a place at the right hand of David, and then fell to musical moans.

Morwen sat by the side, looking at the deceased—she was awaiting her turn to kneel, sing, and lament—and beside her was a rude bench on which were placed cakes and ale wherewith to regale such as came in to wake the dead.

And as Pabo looked at his wife he thought of the peaceful, useful life they had led together.

She had been the daughter of a widow,

a harsh and exacting woman, who had long been bedridden, and with whose querulousness she had borne meekly. He had not been always destined to the Archpriesthood. His uncle had been the ecclesiastical as well as political head of the tribe; but on his death his son, Goronwy, had been passed over as deformed, and therefore incapable of taking his father's place, and the chiefship had been conferred on Pabo, who had already been for some years ordained in anticipation of this selection.

Pabo continued to look at his wife, and he questioned whether he could have understood the hearts of his people had he not himself known what love was.

"Husband," said Morwen, "there is a little roll under his hand."

Pabo started to the consciousness of the present.

"I have not ventured to remove it; yet what think you? Is it to be buried with him? It almost seems as though it were his testament."

The Archpriest rose and went to where the dead man lay; his long white beard

flowed to his waist, and the hands were crossed over it.

"It is in the palm," said Morwen.

Pabo passed his fingers through the thick white hair and drew forth a scroll, hardly two fingers' breadth in width; it was short also, as he saw when he uncurled it.

He opened and read.

"Yes, it is his will. 'To Pabo, the Archpriest, my cell—as a refuge; and——'" He ceased, rolled up the little coil once more, and placed it in his bosom.

A stroke at the door, and one of the elders of the community, named Howel the Tall, entered.

"It seems fit, Father Pabo, to us to meet in council. What say you? All are gathered."

"It is well; I attend."

CHAPTER VII

GRIFFITH AP RHYS

THE council-house of the Caio tribe was a large circular wooden structure, with a conical thatched roof. There was a gable on one side in which was a circular opening to serve as window, and it was unglazed.

As Pabo entered with Howel the Tall he was saluted with respect, and he returned the salutation with grave courtesy.

He took the seat reserved for him, and looked about him, mustering who were present. They were all representative men, either because weighty through wealth, force of character, or intellect.

Among them were two officers, the one Meredith ap David, the Bard, who in his retentive memory preserved the traditions of the tribe and the genealogies of all the

families of the district from Noah. The other was Morgan ap Seissyl, the hereditary custodian of the staff of Cynwyl, and sacristan of the church, enjoying certain lands which went with the *baculus*, or staff, as well as certain dignities.

Howel stepped into the centre of the building and addressed those present, and their president.

“Father Pabo, we who are gathered together have done so with one consent, drawn hither by a common need, to take counsel in our difficulties. Seeing how grave is the situation in which we stand, how uncertain is the future, how ignorant we are of the devices of our enemies, how doubtful what a day may bring forth—we have considered it expedient to meet and devise such methods as may enable us to stand shoulder to shoulder, and to frustrate the machinations of our common foe. By twos and threes we have talked of these things, and now we desire to speak in assembly concerning them.

“And, first of all, we have considered the threats of Bernard, whom the King of the English has thrust upon us by his mere will, to be bishop over us ; a man of whom

we hear no good, who cannot speak our tongue, who despises our nation and its customs, and mocks at our laws. A man is he who has not entered the sheepfold by the door, but has climbed in another way."

His words were received with a murmur of assent.

"And the first time that this intruder has opened his mouth, it has been to provoke unto strife, and to fill all hearts with dismay. He erects barriers where was open common. He prohibits unions which the Word of God does not disallow. He creates spiritual relationships as occasions and excuses for dissolving marriages, where no blood ties exist. He proclaims his mission to be one of breaking up of families and making houses desolate. Now we are sheep without a shepherd, a flock in the midst of wolves. We are neither numerous enough nor strong enough to resist the over-might that is brought against us. By the blessing of David, we have been ever men of peace. Our hands are unaccustomed to handle the bow and wield the sword. We have no prince over us to lead us. We have no bishop over us to advise us. The throne

of our father David is usurped by an intruder whom we will not acknowledge."

He paused. Again his words roused applause.

"And now, it seems to me, that as we are incapable of opposing force to force, we must take refuge in subtlety. It has pleased God, who confounded the speech of men at Babel, that we should preserve that original tongue spoken by Adam in Paradise, in his unfallen state, and that the rest of mankind, by reason of the blindness of their hearts, and the dulness of their understandings, are hardly able to acquire it. Now it has further pleased Providence, which has a special care over our elect nation, that our relationships should present a perplexity to all save unto ourselves. I am creditably informed that the English people are beginning to call themselves after their trades, and to hand down their trade names to their children, so that John the Smith's sons and daughters be also entitled Smiths, although the one be a butcher, and another a weaver—which is but one token out of many that this is an insensate people. Moreover, some call

themselves after the place where they were born, and although their children and children's children be born elsewhere, yet are they called after the township whence came their father—an evident proof of sheer imbecility. Again, it is said that if a John Redhead, so designated by reason of a fiery poll, have a dark-haired son, though the head of this latter be as a raven's wing, yet is he a Redhead. One really marvels that Providence should suffer such senseless creatures to beget children. But there is worse still behind. A Tom has a son George, and he is called Tomson. But if this George have a son Philip, then Philip is not Georgeson, but Tomson. Stupidity could go no farther. Now we are wiser. I am Howel ap John, and John was ap Roderick, and he ap Thomas. There were assuredly a score of Johns in Caio when my father lived, and say that each had five children. Then there be now in the tribe a hundred persons who bear the name of ap John or merch John. Who is to say which John begat this lad or that lass, and therefore to decide who are consanguineous and who are not? There is one man only

whose duty and calling it is to unravel the tangle, and this is Meredith, the genealogist. Should the bishop come here again, or send his commissioner, we have the means of raising such a cloud of confusion with our Johns and Morgans, or Thomases and Merediths, with the *aps* and our *merchs*, as will utterly bewilder his brains. I defy any pig-headed Englishman or Norman either to discover our relationships unless he gets hold of the genealogist."

This was so obviously true and so eminently consolatory that all nodded approvingly.

"This being the case," pursued Howel, "as there is but a single man to unravel this tangle, Meredith ap David, and as he would consider it his sacred duty conscientiously to give every pedigree if asked—therefore I advise that he go into hiding. Then, when the bishop comes we take it upon ourselves to confound his head with our relationships—consanguine, affine, and spiritual—so that he will be able to do nothing in the matter of dissolving our marriages. A child who is ill-treated lies. In that way it seeks

protection. An ill-treated people takes refuge in subterfuge. It is permissible."

This long speech was vastly approved, and all present, even the bard himself, voted with uplifted right hand that it should be carried into effect.

Then Iorwerth the Smith stood up and said—

"It is well spoken ; but all is not done. The chief danger menaces us through our head. It is at the head that the deadly blow is aimed. Griffith ap Rhys, our prince, is not among us. A true bishop is not over us. We have none but our Father Pabo ; and him we must do our utmost to preserve. It is he who stands in greater peril than we. It is true that I struck a fellow on the arm because he molested the wife of our chief ; but that was naught. Blows are exchanged among men and thought lightly of. But our Father Pabo smote the bishop in the mouth and broke his teeth. That will never be forgiven him—never ; and the intruder Bernard will compass sea and land to revenge on him that blow. If our head be taken, what will become of us, the members ? If it be thought expedient

that Meredith the Bard should go into hiding, then I give my voice that our chief should also seek out a refuge where he may not be found."

This opinion was met with murmurs of approval. Then the tall Howel rose and said, "You marked what I said before, that although we approve not deception, yet must the weak take resort unto trickery when matched against the strong. So be it—our Archpriest Pabo shall disappear, and disappear so that the enemy shall not know that he be alive. Leave this to me. An opportunity offers—that Heaven has given to us. Ask me not to explain."

"It is well. We trust thee, Howel."

Then they heard a distant murmur, a hum as of a rising wind, the rustle of trees, the beating of waves. It drew nearer, it waxed louder, it broke out into cries of joy and shouts of exultation as at the bringing in of harvest, and the crowned sheaf—the *wrach*.

The elders of Caio listened and wondered.

Then through the door sprang a young man, and stood where a falling sunbeam

from the one round window rested on him.

He had flowing golden hair that reached his shoulders in curls. He was tall, lithe, graceful, and beautiful.

In a moment they all knew him, as those had recognised him on the way and had accompanied him to the churchtown.

The old, the grey-headed, strong, iron men, and those who were feeble at once encircled him. They threw themselves at his feet, they clasped his knees, those who could kissed his hands, others the hem of his garment.

"Griffith, our Prince! Our heart and soul, our King!"

CHAPTER VIII

PREPARING FOR THE EVIL DAY

AS Nest was the most beautiful woman in Wales, so her brother Griffith was the handsomest of the men there. His face was open and engaging. The blue eyes were honest, the jaw resolute. His address had a fascination few could resist. Moreover, the story of his young life was such as enlisted sympathy and fired the hearts of the Cymri.

His gallant father, a true hero, the King of Dyfed, South Wales, had fallen in battle, fighting against the Normans under Robert Fitzhamon and some turbulent Welsh who had invited the invader into the land. The fall of the great chief had left his country open, defenceless to the spoiler. His eldest son and his daughter had been carried away as hostages, the Prince to die in his

captivity—whether wasting with grief or by the hand of the assassin none knew—and the Princess, dishonoured, had been married to the worst oppressor of her people.

Griffith, the second son, had effected his escape, and had committed himself to his namesake the King of Gwynedd, or North Wales, and had married his daughter.

The crafty Beauclerk was ill pleased so long as the Prince remained at large to head insurrection in the South; perhaps, in combination with his father-in-law, to unite all Cambria in one mighty effort to hurl the invader from the rocks of that mountain world. He accordingly entered into negotiation with the King and invited him to visit him in London. Griffith ap Cynan, the old King of North Wales, flattered by the terms in which he was addressed, pleased with the prospect of seeing more of the world than was possible from his castle-walls in Anglesea, incautiously accepted.

Arrived at Westminster, he was treated with effusive courtesy; King Henry addressed him as a brother, seated him at his side, lavished on him splendid gifts,

and still more splendid promises. Not till he had made the Welshman drunk with vanity and ambition did Henry unfold his purpose. Griffith ap Cynan was offered the sovereignty over North and South Wales united with Cardigan, the Prince of which had fled to Ireland, to be held under the suzerainty of the English Crown, and the sole price asked for this was the surrender of the young Prince, his own son-in-law and guest, a man whose only guilt consisted in having the blood of Rhys in his veins, and who confided in the honour and loyalty of his wife's father.

The King of Gwynedd consented, and hastened home to conclude his part of the contract.

Happily, but not a moment too soon, did Griffith the younger get wind of the treachery that was intended, and he fled before the arrival of the old King.

When the latter discovered that his son-in-law had escaped, he sent a body of horsemen in pursuit. The fugitive, nearly overtaken, took sanctuary in the church of Aberdaron, and the baffled pursuers, not venturing to infringe the rights of the Church, returned unsuccessful to their

master. The King, angry, blind to every consideration save his ambition, bade his men return on their traces, and, if need be, force the sanctuary and tear the Prince from the foot of the altar, should he make that his last refuge.

The executioners of the mandate were not, however, free from the superstitious awe which surrounded a sanctuary. The clergy of the church and of the neighbourhood rose with one consent in protection of the pursued and of the menaced rights, and again the ministers of the King were baffled. By this means time was gained, and the clergy of Aberdaron succeeded by night in securing the escape of the Prince, with a few faithful followers, into the Vale of the Towy.

There he had no alternative open to him but to prepare to take up arms. He at once entered into communication with his sister, on whose fidelity to the cause of the royal family of Dyfed, and of her country, he knew he could calculate. He found the people impatient to fly to arms. Their condition had become intolerable. Wherever they went the barons had introduced the system of feudal tenure, which

was foreign to the laws and feelings of the people, and they vigorously resisted its application. Moreover, foreign ecclesiastics, the kinsmen or clients of the secular tyrants, seized upon the livings. Where a fortress could not be established, there a monastery was planted and filled with foreigners, to maintain whom the tithes and glebes were confiscated, and the benefices converted into vicarages, which were served by English or Continental monks.

Added to this, the King had created the Bishop of London Lord of the Marches and President of Shropshire, and this astute and unprincipled man devoted his energies to the setting at rivalry of all the native princes, and the goading them to war with one another. Such was his policy—let the Welsh cut each other's throats and make way for the Norman and the Fleming.

The wretched people, betrayed by their natural leaders, the princes, deprived of their clergy, subjected to strange laws, with foreign masters, military and ecclesiastic, intruding themselves everywhere, and dispossessing them of all their possessions, felt that it would be better to die

among their burnt farmsteads than live on dishonoured.

At this juncture, when they looked for, prayed for a leader, Griffith, son of their King, suddenly appeared in their midst, with a fresh story of insult and treachery to tell—and make their blood flame.

"I am come," said the Prince, still standing in the falling ray of sun. "I have hasted to come to you with a word from my sister, the Princess Nest. Evil is devised against you—evil you are powerless now to resist. It comes swift, and you must bow your heads as bul-rushes. The enemy is at hand—will be here on the morrow; and what the Princess says to Pabo, your chief, is, Fly for your life!"

"That is what has been determined among us," said Howel.

"It is well—let not a moment be lost!" Then, looking around, "I—my friends, my brothers, am as a squirrel in the forest, flying from branch to branch, pursued even by the hand that should have sheltered me. There is no trust to be laid in princes. I lean on none; I commend my cause to none. I place it in the hearts of the

people. I would lay my head to sleep on the knee of any shepherd, fearless. I could not close my eyes under the roof of any prince, and be sure he would not sell me while I slept."

None answered. It was true—they knew it—too true.

"My brother," said Griffith—and he stepped to each and touched each hand—"I commit myself and the cause of my country to these palms that have held the plough and wielded the hammer, and I fear not. They are true."

A shout of assurances, thrilling from every heart, and the eyes filled with tears.

"My brothers, the moment has not yet arrived. When it comes, I will call and ye will answer."

"We will!"

"My life—it is for you."

"And our lives are at your disposal."

"We know each other," said the Prince, and one of his engaging smiles lighted his face. "But now to the matter in hand. The Bishop Bernard claims the entire region of Caio, from the mountains to where the Cothi enters the ravine, as his own, because it is the patrimony of David,

which he has usurped. And forthwith he sends a mandate for the deposition of your Archpriest Pabo, and his arrest and conveyance under a guard to his castle of Llawhaden."

"He shall not have him."

"Therefore must he escape at once."

"He shall fly to a place of security."

"And that without a moment's delay."

"It shall be so."

"Furthermore, the bishop sends his chaplain Cadell to fill his room, to minister to you in holy things."

"He shall not so minister to us."

"And to occupy the presbytery."

"My house!" exclaimed Pabo.

"He shall not set foot therein," said Howel; "leave that to me."

"I go," said Pabo sadly; "but I shall take my wife with me."

"Nay," answered Howel hastily, "that must not be!"

"But wherefore not? She must be placed where safe from pursuit as well as I."

"She shall be under my protection," said Howel the Tall. "Have confidence in me. All Caio will rise again were she

to be molested. Have no fear ; she shall be safe. But with you she must not go. Ask me not my reasons now. You shall learn them later."

"Then I go. But I will bid her farewell first."

"Not that even," said Howel, "lest she learn whither you betake yourself. That none of us must know."

Then Meredith the Bard rose.

"There is need for haste," he said. "I go."

"And I go too," said Pabo. He looked at the elders with swelling breast and filling eye. "I entrust to you, dear friends and spiritual sons, one more precious to me than life itself." He turned to Griffith: "Prince, God grant it be not for long that you are condemned to fly as the squirrel. God grant that ere long we may hear the cry of the ravens of Dynevor ; and when we hear that——"

All present raised their hands—

"We will find the ravens their food."

CHAPTER IX

WHAT MUST BE

HOWEL the Tall walked slowly to the presbytery, the house of Pabo, that was soon to be his no longer. The tidings that an armed body of men was on its way into the Peaceful Valley—whose peace was to be for ever broken up, so it seemed—had produced a profound agitation. Every one was occupied: some removing their goods, and themselves preparing to retire to the hovel on the summer pastures: those who had no *hafod* to receive them were concealing their little treasures.

A poor peasant was entreating a well-to-do farmer to take with him his daughter, a young and lovely girl, for whom he feared when the lawless servants of the bishop entered Caio.

But all could not take refuge in the mountains, even if they had places there to which to retire. There were their cattle to be attended to in the valley ; the grass on the heights was burnt, and would not shoot again till spring. The equinoctial gales were due, and rarely failed to keep their appointments. There were mothers expecting additions to their families, and little children who could not be exposed to the privations and cold of the uplands. There were no stores on the mountains ; hay and corn were stacked by the homes in the valley.

Some said : " What more can these strangers do than they have done ? Do they come, indeed, to thrust on us a new pastor ? They will not drive us with their pikes into church to hear what he has to say ! They are not bringing with them a batch of Flemings to occupy our farms and take from us our cornland and pasture ! The Norman is no peaceful agriculturist, and he must live ; therefore he will let the native work on, that he may eat out of his hands." And, again, others said : " There will be time enough to escape when they flourish their swords in our faces." But

even such as resolved to remain concealed their valuables.

The basin of the sanctuary was extensive ; it was some seven miles long and five at its widest, but along the slopes of the hills that broke the evenness of its bottom and on the side of the continuous mountains were scattered numerous habitations. And it would be an easy matter for those on the high ground commanding the roads, to take to flight when the men-at-arms were observed to be coming their way.

Howel entered the presbytery.

Like every other house in Wales, excepting those of the great princes, it comprised but two chambers—that which served as hall and kitchen, into which the door opened, and the bed-chamber on one side. There was no upper storey ; its consequence as the residence of the chief was indicated by a detached structure, like a barn, that served as banqueting-hall on festive occasions, and where, indeed, all such as came on Sundays from distances tarried and ate after divine service, and awaited the vespers which were performed early in the afternoon. There were stables,

also, to accommodate the horses of those who came to church, or to pay their respects, and to feast with their chief.

With the exception of these disconnected buildings, the house presented the character of a Welsh cottage of the day in which we live. It was deficient in attempt at ornament, and, unlike a mediæval edifice of the rest of Europe, lacked picturesqueness. At the present, a Welsh cottage or farmhouse is, indeed, of stone, and is ugly.

Although the presbytery was lacking in beauty of outline and detail, it was convenient as a dwelling. As Howel entered, he saw that the body of the hermit still lay exposed, preparatory to burial, with the candles burning at its head. But Morwen was the sole person in attendance on it, as the professional wailer had decamped to secrete the few coins she possessed, and above all to convey to, and place under the protection of, the Church a side of bacon, the half of a pig, on which she calculated to subsist during the winter.

By the side of the fire sat a lean, sharp-featured boy with high cheek-bones; a lad uncouth in appearance, for one shoulder was higher than the other.

He stirred the logs with his foot, and when he found one that was burnt through, stooped, separated the ends, and reversed them in the fire.

This was Goronwy Cam, kinsman of Pabo, the son of the late Archpriest, who had been passed over for the chieftainship, partly on account of his youth, mainly because of his deformity, which disqualified him for the ecclesiastical state.

He lived in the presbytery with his cousin, was kindly, affectionately treated by him, and was not a little humoured by Morwen, who pitied his condition, forgave his perversity of temper, and was too familiar with ill-humours, experienced during her mother's life, to resent his outbreaks of petulance.

"Go forth, Goronwy," said Howel. "Bid Morgan see that the grave for our dead saint be made ready. They are like to forget their duties to the dead in their care for themselves. Bid him expedite the work of the sexton."

"Why should I go? I am engaged here."

"Engaged in doing nothing. Go at once and speak with Morgan. Time presses too hard for empty civilities."

"You have no right to order me, none to send me from this house."

"I have a right in an emergency to see that all be done that is requisite for the good of the living, and for the repose of the dead. Do you not know, boy, that the enemy are on their way hither, and that when they arrive you will no further have this as your home?"

"Goronwy, be kind and do as desired," said Morwen.

The young man left, muttering. He looked but a boy ; he was in fact a man.

When he had passed beyond earshot, Morwen said, "Do not be short with the lad ; he has much to bear, his infirmities of body are ever present to his mind, and he can ill endure the thought that but for them he would have been chief in Caio."

"I have not come hither to discuss Goronwy and his sour humours," said Howel ; "but to announce to you that Pabo is gone."

"Whither?"

"That I do not know."

"For how long?"

"That also I cannot say."

"Is he in danger?" Morwen's colour fled, and she put her hand to her bosom.

"At present he is in none; for how long he will be free I cannot say, and something depends on you."

"On me! I will do anything, everything for him."

"To-morrow the sleuth-hounds will be after him: his safety lies in remaining hid."

"But why has he not come to me and told me so?"

"Because it is best that you know nothing, not even the direction he has taken in his flight. Be not afraid—he is safe so long as he remains concealed. As for you and that boy, ye shall both come to my house, for to-morrow he will be here who will claim this as his own. The bishop who has stepped into David's seat has sent him to dispossess our Archpriest of all his rights, and to transfer them to Cadell, his chaplain."

"But it is not possible. He does not belong to the tribe."

"What care these aliens about our rights and our liberties? With the mailed fists they beat down all law."

"And he will take from us our house?"

"If you suffer him."

"How can I, a poor woman, resist?"

"I do not ask you to resist."

"Then what do you require of me?"

"Leave him no house into which to step and which he may call his own."

"I understand you not."

"Morwen, say farewell you must to these walls—this roof. It will dishonour them to become the shelter of the renegade, after it has been the home of such as you and Pabo, and the Archpriests of our race and tribe for generations—ay, and after it has been consecrated by the body of this saint." He indicated the dead hermit.

"But again I say, I do not understand. What would you have me do?"

"Do this, Morwen." Howel dropped his voice and drew nearer to her. He laid hold of her wrist. "Set fire to the presbytery. The wind is from the east; it will cause the house to blaze merrily."

She looked at him in dismay and doubt.

"To me, and away from this, thou must come, and that boy with thee. Thou wouldest not have Pabo taken from thee and given to some Saxon woman. So,

suffer not this house that thou art deprived of to become the habitation of another—one false to his blood and to his duties.”

“I cannot,” she said, and looked about her at the walls, at every object against them, at the hearth, endeared to her by many ties. “I cannot—I cannot,” and then: “Indeed I cannot with him here”—and she indicated the corpse.

“It is with him here that the house must burn,” said Howel.

“Burn the hermit—the man of God!”

“It would be his will, could he speak,” said Howel. “He, throughout his life, gave his body to harsh treatment, and treated it as the enemy of his soul. Now out of heaven he looks down and bids you—he as a saint in light—do this thing. He withholds not his cast-off tabernacle, if thereby he may profit some.”

“Nay, let him be honourably buried, and then, if thou desirest it, let the house blaze.”

“It must be, Morwen, as I say. Harken to me. When they come to-morrow they will find the presbytery destroyed by fire, and we will say that the Archpriest has perished in it.”

"But they will know it is not so. See his snowy beard!"

"Will the flames spare those white hairs?"

"Yet all know—all in Caio."

"And I can trust them all. When the oppressor is strong, the weak must be subtle. Ay, and they will be as one man to deceive him, for they hate him, and they love their true priest."

"I cannot do it."

"It may be that the truth will come out in a week, a month—I cannot say; but time will be gained for Pabo to escape, and every day is of importance."

"If it must be—but, O Howel, it is hard, and it seemeth to me unrighteous."

"It is no unrighteousness to do that which must be."

"And it must?"

"Morwen, you shall not lay the fire. I will do it—but done it must be."

CHAPTER X

THE CELL ON MALLAEN

AT the back of Caio church and village stretches a vast mountain region that extends in tossed and rearing waves of moorland and crag for miles to the north; and indeed, Mynydd Mallaen is but the southern extremity of that chain which extends from Montgomeryshire and Merioneth, and of which Plinlimmon is one of the finest heads.

The elevated and barren waste is traversed here and there by streams—the Cothi, the Camddwr, the Doethie—but these are through restricted and uninhabited ravines. Mynydd Mallaen, the southernmost projection of this range, is a huge bulk united to the main mountain system by a slight connecting ridge, between the gorge of the Cothi and a tributary of the Towy.

North of this extends far the territory of Caio, over barren wilderness, once belonging to the tribe now delimited as a parish some sixteen miles in length.

On leaving the Council-hall, Pabo tarried but for a few minutes in converse with Howel, and then ascended the glen down which brawled the Annell. The flanks of mountain on each side were clothed with heath and heather now fast losing their bells, and were gorgeous with bracken, turned to copper and gold by the touch of the finger of Death.

He pursued his way without pause along the track trodden by those who visited the rock of Cynwyl, where annually the waters were stirred with his staff.

But on reaching this spot, Pabo halted and looked into the sliding water that swirled in the reputed kneeholes worn by the saint in the rocky bed. A pebble was in one, being eddied about, and, notwithstanding the distress of mind in which was Pabo, he did not fail to notice this as an explanation of the origin of the depressions. Dreamy, imaginative though he might be, he had also a fund of common sense.

The spot was lonely and beautiful, away from the strife of men and the noise of tongues. The stillness was broken only by the ripple of the water and the hum of the wind in the dried fern. The evening sun lit up the mountain heights, already glorious with dying fern, with on oriole of incomparable splendour.

The great stone slept where it had lodged beside that stream, and was mantled with soft velvet mosses and dappled with many-coloured lichen. It was upon its summit, doubtless, that the old Apostle had knelt—not in the bed of the torrent, although the folk insisted on the latter, misled by the hollows worn in the rock.

Pabo, moved by an inward impulse, mounted the block, wrenched, like himself, from his proper place and cast far away, never to return to it. Never to return! That thought filled his mind: he must not attempt to delude himself with hopes. The past was gone for ever, with its peace and love and happiness. Peace—broken by the sound of the Norman's steel, happiness departed with it. Love, indeed, might, must remain, but under a new form

—no more sweet, but painful, full of apprehensions, full of torture.

Discouragement came over him like the cold dews that were settling in the valley now that the sun was withdrawn. Where the Norman had penetrated thence he would have to depart. The sanctuary had been broken into—and the Angel of Peace, bearing the palm, had spread her wings. He looked aloft: a swan was sailing through the sky, the evening glory turning her silver feathers to gold. Even thus—even thus—leaving the land; but not, like that swan, to return at another season.

Pabo knelt on that stone. He put his hand to his brow; it was wet with cold drops, just as the herbage, as the moss, were being also studded with crystal condensations.

He prayed, turning his eyes to the sunlight that touched the heights to the west; prayed till the ray was withdrawn, and the mountain-head was silvery and no longer golden.

Then, strengthened in spirit, he left the block and resumed his course.

Without telling Howel whither he would

betake himself, Pabo had agreed with him on a means of intercommunication in case of emergency. Upon the stone of Cynwyl, Howel was to place one rounded water-worn pebble as a token to flee farther into the depths of the mountains, whereas two stones were to indicate a recall to Caio. In like manner was Pabo to express his wants, should any arise.

The refugee now ascended the steep mountain flank, penetrating farther into the wilderness, till at last he reached some fangs of rock, under which was a rude habitation constructed of stones put together without mortar, the interstices stopped with clay and moss.

It leaned against the rock, which constituted one wall of the habitation, and against which rested the rafters of the roof. A furrow had been cut in the rock, horizontally, so as to intercept the rain that ran down the face and divert it on to the incline of the roof.

The door was unfastened and was swaying on its hinges in the wind, with creak and groan. Pabo entered, and was in the cell of the deceased hermit, in which the old man had expended nearly half his life.



A small but unfailing spring oozed from the foot of the rocks, as Pabo was aware, a few paces below the hermitage.

The habitation was certain not to be deficient in supplies of food, and on searching Pabo found a store of grain, a heap of roots, and a quern. There was a hearth on which he might bake cakes, and he found the anchorite's tinder, flint, and steel.

The day had by this time closed in, and Pabo at once endeavoured to light a fire. He had become heated with the steep ascent, but this warmth was passing away, and he felt chilled. At this height the air was colder and the wind keener. There were sticks and dry heather and fern near the hearth, but Pabo failed in all his efforts to kindle a blaze. Sparks flew from the flint, but would not ignite the spongy fungus that served as tinder. It had lain too many days on a stone, and had become damp. After fruitless attempts, Pabo placed the amadou in his bosom, in hopes of drying it by the heat of his body, and drew the hermit's blanket over his shoulders as he seated himself on the bed, which was but a board.

All was now dark within. The window was but a slit in the wall, and was unglazed. The cabin was draughty, for there was not merely the window by which the wind could enter, but the door as well was but imperfectly closed, and in the roof was the smoke-hole.

What a life the hermit must have led in this remote spot! Pabo might have considered that now, feeling this experience, but, indeed, his mind was too fully occupied with his own troubles to give a thought to those of another.

Shivering under the blanket, that seemed to have no warmth in it, he leaned his brow in his hand, and mused on the dangers, distresses, that menaced his tribe, his race, his wife, which he was powerless to avert.

Prince Griffith might raise the standard and rouse to arms, but it was in vain for Pabo to hug himself in the hope of success and freedom for his people by this means. The North of Wales was controlled by a King who had violated the rights of hospitality and betrayed his own kindred. Thus, all Cambria would not rise as one man, and what could one half of the nation



do against the enormous power of all England? Do? The hope of the young and sanguine, and the despair of the old and experienced, could lead them to nothing else, but either to retreat among the mountains and there die of hunger and cold, or perish gloriously sword in hand on the battle-field.

Pabo lifted his head, and looked through the gap in the thatch. A cold star was twinkling aloft. A twig of heather, got free from its bands, was blown by the night wind to and fro over the smoke-hole, across the star, now brushing it out, then revealing it again.

The cell was not draughty only, it was also damp. Pabo felt the hearth. It was quite cold. Several days had elapsed since the last sparks on it had expired.

The wind moaned among the rocks, sighed at the window, and piped through the crevices about the door. A snoring owl began its monotonous call. Where it was Pabo could not detect. The sound came now from this side then from that, and next was behind him. It was precisely as though a man—he could not say whether

without or within—were in deep stertorous sleep.

Again he endeavoured to strike a light and kindle a fire. Sparks he could elicit, that was all. The fungus refused to ignite.

The cold, the damp, ate into the marrow of his bones. He collected a handful of barley-grains and chewed them, but they proved little satisfying to hunger.

Then he went forth. He must exercise his limbs to prevent them from becoming stiff, must circulate his blood lest it should become coagulated with frost. He would walk along the mountain crest to where, over the southern edge, he could look down on Caio, on his lost home, on where was his wife—not sleeping, he knew she was not that, but thinking of him.

Wondrous, past expression, is that link of love that binds the man and his wife. Never was a truer word spoken than that which pronounced them to be no more twain, but one flesh. The mother parted from her nursling knows, feels in her breast, in every fibre of her being, when her child is weeping and will not be comforted, though parted from it by miles ; an

unendurable yearning comes over her to hurry to the wailing infant, to clasp it to her heart and kiss away its tears. And something akin to this is that mysterious tie that holds together the man and his wife. They cannot live an individual life. He carries the wife with him wherever he be, thinks, feels with her, is conscious of a double existence fused into a unity, and what is true of the husband is true also of the wife.

It was now with Pabo as though he were irresistibly drawn in the direction of Caio, where he knew that Morwën was watching with tears on her cheeks, her gentle, suffering heart full of him and his desolation and banishment.

The night was clear, there was actually not much wind ; but autumn rawness was in the air.

To the west still hung a dying halo, very faint, and the ground, covered with short grass, was dimly white where pearly with dew, each pearl catching something of the starlight from above.

But away to the south was a lurid glow, against which the rounded head of Mallaen stood out as ink.

Pabo thrust on his way, running when he could, and anon stumbling over plots of gorse or among stones.

At length he came out upon the brow, Bronffin, and looked down into the broad basin of Caio. Below him was a fire. It had burned itself out, and lay a bed of glowing cinders, with smoke curling above it, lighted and turned red by the reflection of the fire below. Now and then a lambent flame sprang up, and then died away again.

The sound of voices came up from beneath: it was pleasant to Pabo to hear voices, but in his heart was unutterable pain. He looked down on the glowing ruins of his presbytery—where he had lived and been so happy.

Hour after hour he sat on the mountain-edge, watching the slowly contracting and fading glow, hearing the sounds of life gradually die away.

Then above the range to the left rose the moon, and silvered the white ribbon of the Sarn Helen, the paved road of the old Queen of British race who had married the Roman Emperor Maximus, and illumined the haze that hung over the river-

beds, and far away behind Pen-y-ddinas formed a cloud over the two tarns occupying the bottom of the valley.

But all the while Pabo looked only at one and then at another point—this, the fiery reek of his home, that a spot whence shone a small and feeble light—the house of Howel the Tall, beneath whose roof watched and wept his dearest treasure, Morwen. When midnight was overpassed, and none stirred, then did Pabo descend from the heights and approach the ashes of his home. At the glowing embers he dried the tinder. Then he caught up a smouldering brand, turned and reascended the mountain, with the fire from his ruined hearth wherewith to kindle that in his hovel of refuge.

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CHAPTER XI

A MIRACLE

HAD one been on Bronffin, the mountain-brow overhanging Caio, on the following morning, strange would have been the scene witnessed.

Those of the inhabitants who had not fled were engaged in the obsequies of the hermit who had been burned when the presbytery took fire, and whose charred remains had been extricated from the ruins.

The corpse was borne on a bier covered with a white sheet ; and men and women accompanied, chanting an undulating wail-like dirge, while the priest from Llansawell—a daughter church—preceded the body.

Simultaneously arrived a number of armed men, retainers of the bishop, under the command of his brother, with the

chaplain Cadell in their midst, accompanied by the Dean of Llandeilo and his deacon. Rogier had recovered the use of his arm, which was, however, still somewhat stiff in the joint from the blow he had received.

Their arrival disturbed the procession, for the new-comers rode through the train of wailers manifesting supreme indifference with regard to the proceedings.

"Put down yon bier!" ordered Rogier; and then, because none comprehended his words, he made imperious gestures that could not be mistaken. He was obeyed by the bearers, and the mourners parted and stood back, while the armed men filled in about the chaplain and their leader.

Cadell rose in his stirrups and called in Welsh for silence, that he might be heard.

Then, addressing the inhabitants in loud tones, he said: "It is well that ye are present, assembled, without my having to call you together. Ye shall hear what has been decreed. Proceed with the interment of the dead after that. Draw around and give ear."

All obeyed, though slowly, reluctantly.

When Cadell saw that those of Caio who were gathered to the funeral were

within earshot and attention, he said, speaking articulately, in sharp, distinct sentences, raising himself in his stirrups : " His fatherliness, the Bishop of St. David's, by the grace of God and the favour of Henry King of England and Lord Paramount over Wales, in consideration of the disloyal and irreligious conduct of the people inhabiting the so-called Sanctuary of David in Caio, but forming an integral portion of the patrimony of the See when he, their father and their lord, visited the place but recently, and above all, because the Archpriest did resist him, and further, did not shun to lift up his sacrilegious hand against him, his father in God, and inasmuch as in the divine law communicated to man from Sinai, it is commanded that he who smiteth his father shall surely be put to death, therefore he, their lord and bishop, in exercise of his just and legal rights, doth require *imprimis* : That the said Archpriest, Pabo by name, shall surrender his person to be tried and sentenced by the Court ecclesiastical, then to be handed over to the secular court for execution ; and, further, that he be esteemed *ipso facto* and from this present

nhibited from the discharge of any sacred office, and shall be destituted of all and singular benefices that he may hold in the Menevian diocese, and that he be formally degraded from his sacerdotal character, by virtue of the authority hereby committed to me."

Then Howel the Tall stood forth, and approaching the chaplain, said, "Good master Cadell, this matter hath already been decided and taken out of the province of thy master. Pabo, Archpriest and hereditary chieftain of the tribe of Caio, hath, as saith the Scripture, escaped out of the snare of the fowler. We are even now engaged in the celebration of his obsequies. You have interrupted us as we were about to commit his ashes to the ground."

"How so!" exclaimed the chaplain, taken aback. "Pabo is not dead?"

"Look around thee," answered Howel. "Behold how that fire hath destroyed the presbytery and at the same time hath consumed him who lay therein."

"It was the judgment of God!" cried Cadell. "The manifest judgment of God against the man who lifted his hand against

his spiritual father. Did the lightning flash from heaven to slay him?"

"That I cannot affirm," said Howel.

"Heaven has manifestly and miraculously interposed," said the chaplain, dismounting. In a few words he informed his attendants of what had taken place.

"It is to be regretted," said Rogier. "I had hoped to carry a faggot, wherewith to roast him."

"It soundeth passing strange," said another.

"It is a miracle," persisted Cadell. "God is with us and against those who resist the bishop. This shall be everywhere proclaimed."

"I do not see that as a miracle it was necessary," said Rogier. "For we would have burnt him all the same."

"But," said the chaplain, "it was the will of Heaven to reveal that it is wrath with this people, and is on our side."

Rogier shrugged one shoulder.

"I will have a look at him and satisfy myself," said he, strode to the bier and plucked aside the sheet.

All recoiled at the object revealed—a human being burnt to a cinder.

"By the soul of the Conqueror," said the bishop's brother, "methought he had been a man of more inches."

"He is shrunk with the fire," explained the chaplain.

"I would I could be certain it is he," said Rogier.

"We will subject them to an oath," said Cadell. "If it be he, then, assuredly, his wife—that woman whom he called his wife—will not be far away."

"She is the chief mourner," said Howel.

Then he took Morwen by the hand and led her forward. "She is here."

"Ah, ha! my pretty wench!" said Rogier, "praise Heaven that thou art released from thy leman. We may find thee a better man, and not one that wears the cassock."

"Come hither," said the chaplain; "I desire thee to take the strictest and most solemn oath that he who there lieth charred as a burned log is none other than Pabo the Archpriest, whom thou didst call thy husband. What be the chiefest relics here?" he asked, looking round.

"We have but the staff of Cynwyl; but

that is mighty and greatly resorted to," said Howel.

"Where is it? Bring it hither."

"I am the custodian of the relic," said Morgan ap Seissyl. "But it is not customary to produce it unless it be attended and treated with all reverence."

"Take with you whom you will," said the chaplain impatiently. "Faugh! cast again the pall over it."

Morgan chose Howel and another, and they departed towards the church.

After a few moments' delay they returned, Morgan in the centre, bearing the staff.

"Lay it on the corpse," said Cadell.

"Have a care," said Howel, with a curve in the lip. "That staff has been known to have raised the dead to life again."

"It were well it did so now," laughed Rogier, when Cadell, somewhat dashed, interpreted what had been said. "I' faith, I would be glad to have a hand in the second burning of him."

"Hath it really done so?" asked the chaplain.

"There was Ewan the son of Morgan

ap Rees who fell from a tree," said Howel, "and he lay stone dead. Then, full of faith, his mother cried out for the staff of Cynwyl, and lo! when it was laid on the lad he opened his eyes and spoke."

"Hold it above the body," said the chaplain, "one at each end, so as not to touch, and in such wise let the woman take oath."

Again was the linen sheet removed, and now Morgan and an attendant sacristan held the relic, one at the head, the other at the foot, so that it was above the body, yet not touching it; only the shadow fell upon it.

"Go thrice round it," enjoined Morgan, signing with his head to Morwen; "thrice from left to right, with the sun, then lay thine hand on the staff and take the required oath."

Morwen shuddered, but she obeyed, though pale as death. When she had made the third circuit she was forced, shrinking and with averted head, to approach the dead man. Then Cadell said in a loud voice, "Lay thy hand thereon and say these words: 'I take oath before God and Cynwyl, before the saints and

angels in heaven, in the face of sun and moon and all men here present, that this is the dead body of Pabo, late Arch-priest—whom I did esteem as my husband.’”

Then Morwen repeated, mechanically, the first words of adjuration, but added, in place of what Cadell had recited, “I take oath that if this be not Pabo, the Arch-priest, and my husband, I know not where he is.”

“That sufficeth,” said Cadell. “And now,” he spoke aloud, turning to the assistants, “seeing that this man hath manifestly died by the just judgment of God, and to the notable confirmation of the authority of Bernard, the bishop, I declare that he be treated as one excommunicate, and be not buried within consecrated ground.”

The people of Caio murmured and looked at one another disconcerted.

Then Howel went among them and whispered a few words. Cadell did not observe him ; he was intent on speaking once more. That he might be the better heard, he remounted his horse.

“Inhabitants of the sanctuary and of

the tribe of Caio," said he, in the same distinct and sharp tones as before, "I have something further to add. *Secundo* : Inasmuch as the Archpriest Pabo hath manifestly perished by the interposition of Heaven, thus obviating his deposition as purposed, now his fatherliness, Bernard, Bishop of Menevia, is graciously pleased to nominate and present me, unworthy, to fill his room ; in token whereof, the Dean of Llandeilo accompanies, so as straight-way to induct me into all the offices, benefices, spirituals that were possessed by Pabo, the late Archpriest. *Tertio* : And inasmuch as the people of the territory and tribe of Caio did resist and mutinously assail the servants of the bishop, he imposes on them a fine of a mark in silver per house, great and small, to be collected and paid within one month from this day, until which time his attendants now accompanying me shall have free quarters and entertainment for themselves and their beasts among you."

His words filled all with dismay. None answered.

Then said Rogier laughingly, "I" faith, while Providence punished the late Arch-

priest, it did not mightily favour the incomer, for it hath consumed his presbytery."

"The hall still standeth," said Cadell sternly. "Are we to question the ways of Heaven?"

"Odds life," pursued Rogier mockingly, "who would ever have considered my brother a saint, and one to be sustained by miracles; and he, but the other day, as great a Jew in grinding the peasants, and wringing the blood from their noses, as any son of Abraham. By the paunch of the Conqueror—and taking tithe and toll therefrom to his own benefit! Well! If Heaven be not nice in whom it proclaims as saints, there is good hope for such as me."

Somewhat later, the new Archpriest indited the following letter to his ecclesiastical superior:—

"Cadell, Archpriest of Caio, to Bernard, Lord Bishop of St. David's, sendeth humbly greeting, with much filial affection.

"This is to inform your fatherliness that it has pleased Heaven—which is wondrous in the saints—to vindicate thy sanctity in a very special and marvellous



manner. It is now many hundred years ago since David, the holy, founded the bishopric of Menevia, and primacy over all Cambria; and it is said he was thereto ordained and appointed by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Now it is a notable fact that there was a certain Boia, a chief of the land, who mightily opposed him. Then fell fire from Heaven in the night, and consumed Boia and his wife and all that he had, in witness thereto remaineth the Cleggyr Voia, his ruined and burnt castle, unto this day. Since then many have been the bishops who have sat in the seat of David, and many also have been those who have opposed them. The Northmen have slain some, and have expelled others, yet did not Heaven interfere in their behalf. Nevertheless, no sooner art thou, Bernard, appointed and consecrated to this See, than have thy right and thy holiness been vindicated miraculously in the sight of all. For the Archpriest and chief Pabo did oppose thee even as did Boia oppose David. And each was smitten in the same way. Manifestly in the sight of all men, fire fell from Heaven and consumed him who sacrilegiously lifted his

hand against thee, him and all his house, whereof we are witnesses—to wit, thy brother Rogier, the Dean of Llandeilo, and all thy servants and the people of Caio, as well as my unworthy self, thy servant, who beheld him—the transgressor—burned as a charred log, blasted by Heaven. And forasmuch as he perished by the judgment of God, I have bidden give to him but the burial of an ass.

“Be this known unto all men, and it will mightily extend the fear of thee, and dissuade men from temerarily resisting thy just authority, whether in the diocese or throughout Wales.”

When the chaplain had written this, as he sealed it, he said to Rogier, “It is so wonderful, he will hardly credit it.”

“My good Cadell,” replied the Norman adventurer, “I know my brother better even than do you. He is so inordinately vain that he would believe if you told him that the sun and moon had bowed down to worship him. But I—whether I believe this, that is another matter.”

“But I believe it—that I solemnly affirm,” said Cadell. “And, further, do you not recollect that his fatherliness the

bishop did threaten as much, when he was here, and the Archpriest withstood him? 'Can I not send lightning to consume thee?' was what he said, and lo! it has fallen even as he menaced."

CHAPTER XII

GORONWY

THE Blessed Valley, which for nearly five hundred years had enjoyed the "Peace of Dewi," which had remained untroubled in the midst of the most violent commotions, was now a prey to the spoiler.

Throughout the whole basin all was trouble. The armed men, servants of the bishop, for the most part Normans and Englishmen, but some Welshmen who had taken service under the oppressors of their countrymen, were dispersed through the district.

Ostensibly they were engaged in numbering the hearths, for the exaction of the fine, but with this they did not content themselves. They entered every house, and conducted themselves therein as

masters, aware that they were not likely to be called to order for the grossest outrages by either Rogier or by the bishop.

They demanded food and drink, they ransacked the habitations and plundered them. They wasted what they could not consume, and destroyed what they did not take. The men they treated with contumely and the women with insult.

A farmer who had a *hafod*, a summer byre, as well as a *hendre*, a winter residence, must pay for both. The poorest squatter would be forced to contribute as well as the wealthiest proprietor. "A mark of silver for a house," said Rogier; "settle it among you how the money is to be extracted. The rich will pay for the poor. In a fortnight we shall have every hearth registered."

One wretched man, whose hovel had been broken into, set fire to it. "This," said he, "shall not be counted. I have no house now, no roof, no hearth. Therefore it shall not be reckoned in."

"It was recorded before you set it in flames," was the answer. "It pays all the same."

A father attempting to defend his daughter against one of the dissolute soldiers received a blow on his head which cut it open and cast him senseless on the ground. He lay in a precarious condition ; and the girl had been carried off.

A lone woman, aged, poor, a widow dependent on the charity of the neighbours, through their dispersion, or through forgetfulness, had died in solitude, by starvation.

Several well-to-do men, landowners, in attempting to resist the plunderers, had been unmercifully beaten.

It was an open secret that Rogier was seeking in all directions for the beautiful Morwen ; but Tall Howell had the cunning to evade his search, by moving her about from house to house.

On Sunday, with the exception of some of the soldiers, hardly any natives appeared in the church. The few who did show were some old women. It transpired that the inhabitants of the Caio district had gone for their religious duties to some of the chapels, of which there were at least six, scattered over the territory of the

tribe, where they had been ministered to by the assistant clergy.

When this came to Cadell's ears, he had his horse saddled, and attended by some of the men-at-arms, rode to the residences of these vicars, dismissed them from their offices, and had them removed by the bishop's retainers and thrust over the borders, with a threat of imprisonment should they return.

On the following Sunday the church of Cynwyl was as deserted as before. "He has deprived us of our pastors," said the people, "he cannot rob us of our God."

Then as Cadell learned that they had assembled in the chapels, and had united in prayer under the conduct of one of the elders, he rode round again, and had the roofs of these chapels removed.

"This is better," said the people. "There is naught now betwixt us and God. He will hear us the readier."

The day arrived for the benediction of the waters of the Annell. Then it transpired that the rod of Cynwyl had been abstracted from the church. In a rage, Cadell sent for the hereditary custodian.

Morgan appeared with imperturbable face. "Ah!" said he, "this comes of having here such godless rascals as you have, foreigners who respect nothing human or divine. You brought forth the staff to lay it on the body—and this before all eyes. These rapacious men saw that there was gold on the case, and that stones of price were encrusted therein. Had they stolen the case and left the wooden staff, it would not have mattered greatly. But what to them are the merits of one of our great saints? They regard them not."

Rogier now considered that it were well to hasten matters to a conclusion. He accordingly sent round messengers to every principal farmhouse to summon a meeting of the elders in the council-house, that he might know whether they were ready with the fine, and what measures they had taken to raise it.

Cadell was dissatisfied and uneasy. He sat ruminating over the fire. The hall that had escaped being burnt had been accommodated for his occupation without much difficulty, as such articles as were needed to furnish it were requisitioned

without scruple from the householders of Caio.

But Cadell was discontented. In a few days the bishop's servants, who had brought him to the place and had seen him there installed, would be withdrawn. Then he would be left alone in the midst of a hostile and incensed population. Although they might not overtly resist him, they would be able in a thousand ways to make his residence among them unendurable. He might wring from them their ecclesiastical dues, but would be unable to compel those many services, small in themselves, which go to make life tolerable. He had already encountered reluctance to furnish him with fuel, to supply him with meal and with milk, to fetch and to carry, to cook and to scour. To get nothing done save by the exercise of threats was unpleasant when he was able to call to his aid the military force placed at his disposal; when, however, that force was withdrawn, the situation would be intolerable.

If there had been a party, however small, in the place that favoured the English, he would have been content;

but to be the sole representative of the foreign tyranny, political as well as ecclesiastical, under which the people writhed—that was beyond his strength. And the situation was aggravated by the fact that he was himself a Welshman, and was therefore regarded with double measure of animosity as a renegade.

He was uneasy, as well, on another head. Rogier had let drop a hint that his brother intended to reduce the Archpriesthood of Caio to a mere vicariate on small tithe, and to appropriate to himself the great tithe with the object of eventually endowing therewith a monastery in the basin of the Cothi, probably by the tarns at the southern end. "We shall never crush the spirit out of this people," said Rogier, "unless we plant a castle on Pen-y-ddinas, or squat an abbey by those natural fishponds at Talley."

If this were done, then he, Cadell, would have been inadequately repaid for the vexations and discomforts he would be forced to endure. The troop sent with him, Cadell could not but see, had done their utmost to roughen his path. They had exasperated the people beyond endurance.

As he sat thus musing a young man entered cautiously, looked around, and sidled towards him. He was deformed.

The chaplain looked up and asked what he required.

"I have come for a talk," said the visitor. "May I sit? I know this hall well; it belonged to my father. I am Goronwy, son of the former Archpriest Ewan, or John, as you please to call him."

Cadell signed to a seat. He was not ill-pleased at a distraction from his unpleasant thoughts, and he was not a little gratified to find a man of the place ready to approach him without apparent animosity or suspicion.

"You do not appear to me to have a pleasant place," pursued Goronwy. "I saw a beetle once enter a hive. The bees fell on him, and in spite of his harness, stung him to death, and after that built a cairn of wax over him. There he lay all the summer, and every bee that entered or left the hive trampled on the mound of wax that covered their enemy."

"Their stings shall be plucked out," said Cadell.

"Aye, but you cannot force them to furnish you with honey, nor prevent them from entombing you in wax. They will do it—imperceptibly, and tread you under foot at the last."

Cadell said nothing to this ; he muttered angrily and contemptuously, and drew back from the fire to look at his visitor.

A lad with a long face, keen, beady eyes, restless and cunning, long arms, and large white hands. His body was mis-shapen and short, but his limbs disproportionately long.

"I should have been Archpriest here," pursued he ; "but because I am not straight as a wand, they rejected me. In your Latin Church, are they as particular on this point?"

"We can dispense with most rules—if there be good reason for it."

"Do you think, in the event of your getting tired of being here, among those who do not love you, that you could make room for me?"

"For you!" Cadell stared.

"Aye! I ought to have been chief here, only they passed me over for Pabo. I

have a hereditary right to be both chief and priest in Caio."

Then Cadell laughed.

"You are a misshapen fool," he said ;
"dost think that Bishop Bernard would give thee such a place as this—to foment rebellion against him?"

"He might give it to me, if I undertook to do him a great service, and to bring the place under his feet."

"What service could such as you render?"

"Would not that be a service to bring all Caio into subjection? See! I doubt not that a good fat prebend would be more to your liking than this lost valley among the mountains, traversed by the Sarn Helen alone, which was a road frequented once when the Romans were here, and the gold-mines were worked, and Loventum was a city. But now—it is naught. Few use it."

Cadell mused on this astonishing proposal.

It was quite true. He would rather far be a canon at St. David's, with nothing to do, than be stationed here in this lonely nook surrounded by enemies.

Caio, however, with Llansawel and Pump-saint, its daughter benefices, was a rich holding, and not to be sacrificed except for something better. Yet he feared the intentions of Bernard with regard to it.

"You see," continued Goronwy, "that the people are so maddened at what has been done and so bitterly opposed to you that were I appointed in your room——"

"But you are not a priest."

"Was not Bernard pitchforked into the priesthood and episcopate in one day? Could not something of the sort be done with me?"

Again Cadell was silent.

Goronwy suffered him to brood over the proposal.

"If you were to leave for something better they would hail me as one of themselves, and their rightful chief. And I would repay the bishop and you for doing it."

Still Cadell did not speak.

Then Goronwy drew nearer to him. His small eyes contracted and his thin lips became pointed as he said, "Pabo is not dead."

Cadell started.

"Dead! I know he is dead! I saw his body!"

Goronwy broke into a mocking laugh.

"I saw him—charred; and I had him buried under a dungheap outside the church garth, as befitted one struck down by the judgment of Heaven."

"Pabo is not dead," repeated Goronwy jeeringly.

"He is dead. It was a manifest miracle. I have told the bishop of it. It would spoil everything if, after I had announced it, he were found not to be dead."

"Yes," said the young man, rubbing his large hands together, "it would spoil everything."

Then seized by a sudden terror, Cadell exclaimed, "It was threatened—the staff of Cynwyl would raise the dead. It has done it before."

"Oh! the staff of Cynwyl had naught to do with it."

"Merciful heavens, angels and saints protect me! If that burned lump is raised, and walks, and were to come here, and—come to me when in bed——!" In the horror of the thought, Cadell was unable

to conclude the sentence. But he broke forth: "It is not so. If he be alive, he is no longer under the dungheap where he was laid. I will go see."

"Go, by all means," said Goronwy, and laughed immoderately.

"Tell me more. You know more."

"Nay, go and see. I will tell nothing further till I have a written and sealed promise from the bishop that he will appoint me Archpriest of Caio."

Cadell ran from the hall. Filled with terror, he got together some of the men of the bishop, and they searched where the burnt body had been laid. It was not there.

Back to the hall came the chaplain. Goronwy still sat over the fire warming and then folding and unfolding his hands. "He is gone. He is not where we buried him," gasped Cadell.

"Oh, he is gone! I told you Pabo was alive. He is walking to and fro—when the moon shines you may see him. When it is dark he will come on you unawares, from behind, and seize you."

Cadell cowered in alarm. "I would to Heaven I were out of this place!" he gasped.



"Now, mark you," said Goronwy.
"Get the promise of this Archpriesthood
for me, and I will deliver Pabo, risen
from the dead, into your hands, and, if
he desire it also, Morwen into the arms
of Rogier."

CHAPTER XIII

IT MUST BE MAINTAINED

ROGIER broke into a roar of laughter when Cadell, with white face and in an agitated voice, told him that Pabo was not dead.

"'Sdeath!" he exclaimed. "I never quite believed that he was."

"Not that he was dead?" cried the chaplain. "Did you ever see a man burnt as black as a coal and live after it?"

"That was not he. I doubted it then."

"It must have been he. He was buried as a dog in a dungheap, and"—Cadell lowered his voice—"he is no longer there."

"Because these fellows here have removed the body and laid it in consecrated ground. It was a trick played on us,

clever in its way, though I was not wholly convinced. Now I shall let them understand what it is to play jokes with me. I can joke as well."

"But what do you mean, Rogier?"

"That these Welsh rogues have endeavoured to make us believe that the old Archpriest is dead, so that our vengeance might be disarmed and he allowed to escape. He is in hiding somewhere. Where is that fellow who informed you?"

"Nothing further is to be got out of him."

"We shall see."

"I pray you desist. He may be useful to us; but it must not be suspected that he is in treaty with us."

"There is some reason in this. I shall find out without his aid."

"Do nothing till I have seen the bishop. He will be very distressed—angry. For I assured him that a miracle had been wrought. It was such an important miracle. It showed to all that Heaven was on our side."

Rogier laughed.

"We can cut and carve for ourselves without the help of miracles," said he.

"I shall go at once," said Cadell; "the bishop must be communicated with immediately—and his pleasure known."

Bernard of St. David's was at his castle of Llawhaden, near Narberth. He was there near his Norman friends and supporters. He had no relish for banishment to the bare and remote corner of Pembrokeshire stretching as a hand into the sea, as though an appeal from Wales to Ireland for assistance. Moreover, Bernard was by no means assured that his presence where was the throne would be acceptable, and that it might not provoke some second popular commotion which would cost him a further loss of teeth. Llawhaden lay in a district well occupied by Norman soldiers and Flemish settlers. The residence there was commodious in a well-wooded and fertile district. The castle was strong, secure against surprises, built by architect and masons imported from Normandy, as were all those constructed by the conquerors throughout the South of Wales.

In Llawhaden Bernard lived like a temporal baron, surrounded by fighting men, and never going abroad without his military retinue. It was said that he ever



wore a fine steel-chain coat of mail under his woollen ecclesiastical habit. In his kitchen, as about his person, no native was suffered to serve, so suspicious was he lest an attempt should be made on his life, by poison or by dagger.

Happily, he was not required to perform any ecclesiastical functions, for he was profoundly ignorant of these; and the situation was such that he was not required to ordain clergy or consecrate churches. Clergy were not lacking. The ne'er-do-weels of England, men who were for their immorality or crimes forced to leave their cures, hasted to Wales, where they readily found preferment, as the great object was to dispossess the natives of their land and of their churches.

"So you are here," said the bishop. He spoke with inconvenience, as one front tooth had been knocked out and another broken. Unless he drew down his upper lip, his words issued from his mouth indistinctly, accompanied by a disagreeable hiss. "Hah!—have the bumpkins paid up so readily that you are here with the money? How many marks have they had to disgorge?"

"Your fatherliness," said the chaplain, "I have brought nothing with me save unsatisfactory tidings."

"What! They will not pay?"

"They can be made to find the silver," said Cadell; "of that I do not doubt. For centuries these men of Caio have prospered and have hoarded. Other lands have been wasted, not theirs; other stores pillaged, theirs have been untouched."

"It is well. They will bear further squeezing. But what ails thee? Thou lookest as though thou hadst bitten into a crab-apple."

"I have come touching the miracle."

"Ah! to be sure—the miracle. I have sent despatches containing complete accounts thereof to his Majesty King Henry, and to my late gracious mistress, the Queen. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who consecrated me at Westminster, looked as sour as do you. He would fain have had the consent of the Pope, as father of Christendom, but the King would brook no delay, and the Archbishop was not so stubborn as to hold out—glad in this, to get a bishop of St. David's to swear submission to the stool of Augustine.

I have sent him as well a narrative of the miracle ; it will salve his conscience to see that Heaven is manifestly with me. Moreover, I have had my crow over Urban of Llandaff. *He* has not a miracle to boast of to bolster up his authority."

"My gracious master and lord, I grieve to have to assure you that there has been some mistake in the matter for which I am in no way blameworthy."

"How a mistake?" asked Bernard testily.

"There has been no miracle."

"No miracle! But there has. I have it in your own handwriting."

"I wrote under a misapprehension."

"Misapprehension, you Welsh hound! You misapprehend your man, if you think I will allow you to retract in this matter."

"I really do not know what to say, for I do not know what to think about the circumstance. It is, I fear, certain that Pabo lives."

"Pabo lives! Why you saw him burnt to a coal! I have your written testimony. You invoked the witness of the Dean of Llandeilo, and he has formally corroborated it. I have it under his hand. You

declared that there were hundreds who could bear testimony to the same."

"Lord Bishop, I cannot now say what is the truth. It is certain that your brother and we all were shown the charred relics of a man, whom the inhabitants of Caio were proceeding to inter with the rites of religion, as their late Archpriest. When I learned that he had died by fire, by the judgment of God, then I stayed the ceremony, and bade that his body should be laid under a dungheap."

"You did well. It is there still?"

"It is not, my Lord Bishop."

"Do you mean to declare that he is risen from his grave?"

"Your brother is of opinion that we have been deceived by the tribesmen of Caio, so as to make us suppose that this their Archpriest and chief was dead, and that he is now in concealment somewhere. He further saith that the people have secretly removed the dead man from the place where cast, and have lain him in the churchyard."

"But—who can he have been?"

"I know not."

"And I care not," said the bishop.

"Pabo was struck by fire from heaven, because he opposed me. Why, when Ahaziah sent captains of fifty with their fifties against the prophet Elijah, did not lightning fall and consume them and their fifties twice? Is a ragged old prophet under the law of Moses to be served better than me, a high prelate under the Gospel? I see but too plainly, Cadell, you, being a Welshman, would rob me of the glory that appertains to me. What grounds have you for this preposterous assertion?"

"There is a young man, the son of a former Archpriest, who has been slighted and overpassed, and has harboured resentment against Pabo. He came to me secretly and told me that we had been deceived—they used subtlety so as to be able the more effectually to conceal their chief from your just resentment."

"I do not believe a word of it. I have written and sent certified testimonies that Pabo was burned by fire from heaven. Where is this alleged Pabo?"

"I know not. The young man I speak of is ready to assist us to secure him."

"I do not want him. I want and will

have my miracle. Did you not hear me? When I visited Caio, I said to Pabo that I would call down fire from heaven upon his head. I take you to witness that you heard me."

"But what, my dear master and lord, if he were to appear, and all men were to discover that there had been no miracle?"

"I *will* have my miracle," persisted Bernard, in petulant tones. "I have gone too far with it to retract. Odds life! I should become a laughing-stock all through Wales; and I know well the humour of his Majesty. Over his cups he would tell the tale and burst his sides with laughing; and he would cast it in the teeth of my gracious mistress, the Queen. I have gone too far—I will have my miracle. If there be a man who is going about calling himself Pabo the Archpriest, let him be arrested as an impostor."

"There will be talk concerning it."

"There must be no noise. By the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, we must hush it up! As a minister of the Truth, a prelate of the Church, it is my sovereign duty to put down all imposition. Go now! I will even send a letter to Gerald

of Windsor, who is at his castle of Carreg Cennen, in a retired vale away from every road, and from most habitations. I will bid him receive this false Pabo, and take such measures that the wretched impostor trouble us no more. As to my brother, bid him, if he lay hand on this dissembler and deceiver of men, this lying rogue, contrive to get him away unnoticed, and with no noise, out of Caio, where he may be observed, and to send him under escort and by night to Gerald at Carreg Cennen."

"It shall be so. And—with regard to the young man of whom I spake?"

"That young man is a pest. Why should he have disturbed us with his suggestions?"

"I venture to remind your fatherliness that he has but allowed us to see what is at work behind our backs. He tells us what is known to all men in Caio. Pabo might come forward at any time and show that he is alive."

"That is true. What further about this young man?"

"He offers to be the means of putting Pabo in our power."

"And his price?"

"In the event of your fatherliness transferring me to some other place of usefulness, such as a canonry at St. David's, he protests that were he named to the Archpriesthood he would in all way subserve your interests. As he belongs to the chieftain's family, he would be well received by the people, and their suspicions disarmed."

"Well, well, promise him anything—everything. I shall not be bound to performance. But hark you, Master Cadell! If this miracle be a little breathed upon, then you must contrive me another that cannot be upset by scoffers. Find me a paralytic or a blind person whom I may recover. That would go mightily to confirm the miracle of the burning of Pabo. And bid my brother act warily and proceed secretly, require him to treat this dissembler as what he is—a personator of a man who is on sure warrant dead, slain by the judgment of God."

"I would fain have it under your hand and seal," said Cadell. "Your brother Rogier acts after his own will, and is not amenable to my advice."

"You shall have it—also a letter to

Gerald of Windsor. Get you away now. The epistles shall be ready by night, and you shall ride at cockcrow. And, mind you this, Master Cadell, if you lust after a canonry, provide me a new miracle. As to that already wrought, at all hazards it must be maintained. Not on my account. I am a poor worm, a nothing! But for policy, for the good of the Cause; lest these Welsh should come to crow over us."

CHAPTER XIV

THE FALL OF THE LOT

THE elders of the Caio tribe assembled as enjoined. Some few were not present, risking the anger of Rogier rather than appear before him. But the majority conceived it advisable to attend; and, in fact, a gathering of the notables was necessary for the apportionment of the fine that had to be raised. Although a mark in silver was what had to be exacted from each house, yet, as the majority of the inhabitants were too poor to pay such a sum, the richer would have to supplement the deficiency. The fine was imposed on the district as a whole. The amount was calculated by the hearths, but each householder was not expected to pay the same fixed sum.

This was well understood, and the ad-

justment of the burden had to be considered in common. There was, so it was generally supposed, no exceptional cause for further uneasiness. The tax must be raised, and when the silver had been paid, then the valley would be rid of its intruders—with the exception of the renegade Cadell, forced on the tribe as its ecclesiastical chief. That Rogier had any fresh cause of complaint against the inhabitants was not suspected.

They assembled accordingly, and entered the council-hall.

It was not till all were within that the young men and women without were filled with alarm and suspicion by seeing the men-at-arms slowly, and in orderly fashion, close in and completely surround the edifice, and a strong detachment occupy the door.

Rogier had remained outside, and gave directions. Presently he stepped within, attended by two men, one of whom served as his interpreter.

The sun was shining, and it had painted a circle on the floor through the opening in the gable.

Then the Norman took his sword, and

drew a line in the dust with it from the president's seat to the doorway.

"I give ye," said he, "till the sun hath crossed this line, wherein to discuss and arrange as to the payment of the fine. Till then—no one leaves the hall. After that—I have a further communication to make."

The men looked in one another's faces and wondered what this meant. A fresh impost? They were not aware that occasion had been given for this; but who could be sure with one so rapacious as Rogier! It was the case of the Wolf and the Lamb in the fable.

The Norman now left the court-house and sauntered about outside, speaking to his men, looking pryingly among those of the natives who, in an anxious, timorous crowd, remained in every avenue between the houses, ready at a threat to escape.

After the lapse of approximately an hour the Norman re-entered the hall and walked directly to the principal seat to take it.

Then up started an aged man, and with vehement gesticulations and in words of excitement addressed him: "That seat is taken by none—save of the race of

Cunedda. It belongs to our chief, who is of the blood royal. None other may occupy it."

"I take it by the right of the sword," answered Rogier. "And let me see the man who will turn me out of it. I take it as deputy for my brother, the bishop."

He laughed contemptuously, and let himself down on the chair.

"Well," said he, looking round, "have you settled among yourselves as to the contribution? The round gold patch touches my line. I give you till it has passed across it to conclude that matter."

Then Howel ap John stood up.

"We have considered and apportioned the charges," he said, and his cunning eyes contracted. "Amongst ourselves we have arranged what each is to pay. But, inasmuch as we are nothing save tribesmen of our chief, and as the right over the land was at one time wholly his, but has since suffered curtailment, so that portions have become hereditary holdings of the chief men, yet as still the common lands, as well as the glebe and the domain, belong to the chief, it has seemed reasonable and just that he should bear one-third of the fine,

and that this shall be levied on his land and homesteads, and two-thirds upon us."

When this was translated to Rogier, he laughed aloud.

"I see," said he, "the holder of the benefice is to bear a third. What will Cadell say to that?"

"It is a decision according to equity," said Howel.

"I care not. Cadell is not here to protect himself. So long as I have the silver to hand to the bishop, it is indifferent to me whether you bleed your own veins, or fleece your pastor. He has been put in a fat pasture by my brother ; it is right that he pay for it."

"In two days the silver shall be brought here and weighed out."

"It is well." Rogier looked at the sun-patch. "That is concluded ; now tarry till the sun traverses the line. Then we will broach other business."

All sat now in silence, their eyes on the soil, watching the patch of light as it travelled.

The men of Caio were aware that the doorway was guarded. But what was threatened they could not conjecture.

They had endured intolerable provocations without resistance. They were anxious at heart ; their breasts contracted at the dread of fresh exactions. Some looked at Rogier to endeavour to read his purpose in his face ; but his, as well as the countenances of his attendants, were expressionless.

The sun-round passed on. Then a cloud obscured the light, a fine and fleecy cloud that would be gone shortly.

All tarried in silence, breathless, fearing they knew not what—but expecting no good.

Then the sun burst forth again, and the circle of fire appeared beyond the line.

At once Rogier stood up.

“ You men of Caio, you have thought to deal with a fool, and to deceive me by your craft. But I know what has been done, and will make you to understand on whom ye have practised your devices. Pabo, the chief and Archpriest, is not dead. It was not he who was consumed in the presbytery. Ye played a stage mystery before our eyes to make us believe that he was dead, and that you were burying him. Pabo is alive and is

among you, and you know where he is concealed."

The interpreter was interrupted by outcries of, "We know not. If that were not he, we cannot say where he be. We found a man burned to a cinder. Were we in error in supposing him to be our chief? Show us that it was so!"

Rogier remained unmoved by the clamour.

"Ye are like a parcel of lying, quibbling women," he said. "Pabo is in hiding. Ye are all leagued together to save him. But have him from his lurking-den I will."

"We cannot say where he is. There is not one of us who knows."

"You will admit that he whom ye pretended to be Pabo was some other?"

They looked doubtfully at each other.

"We could not tell. The dead man was found in the ruins of the burnt house. We thought it was Pabo."

"Ye did not. Ye contrived the device between you."

"We will swear that we know not where he is. Bring forth the staff of Cynwyl."

"The staff has been stolen. But I will not trust your oaths. Did not the wife

of Pabo swear thereon?" Then Rogier laughed. "She was crafty as the rest of you, and deceived us in her oath. Nay, I will trust no oaths. I will place my reliance on something more secure. Hey! bring forward my bassinet!"

At his order, one of the attendants went to the door and received a steel cap from a soldier without.

"In this bassinet," said Rogier, "there are short willow twigs. There are more twigs than there are householders and notables here assembled. Of these twigs all but six are blank; but on half a dozen a death's head has been scored, with a dagger-point, rubbed in with black. He who draws such a figured twig shall be hung on the gallows, where is suspended your church bell—one to-day, a second to-morrow. On Sunday, being a sacred day, none; on Monday a third, on Tuesday a fourth, on Wednesday a fifth, on Thursday the sixth. And on Friday ye shall all assemble here once more, and again draw the lots. I shall hang one of you every day till Pabo be delivered up to me, alive."

Then there broke forth cries, protests,

entreaties ; there were hands stretched towards the window through which the sun entered, in oath that the whereabouts of Pabo was not known ; there were arms extended to Rogier in assurance that Pabo was actually dead. Some cried out that they had had no cognisance of any plot to deceive. Many folded their arms in sullen wrath or despair.

Then Rogier lifted his sword and commanded silence. "No word spoken," said he, "will move me from my purpose. One thing can alone rob the gallows of its rich burden—the delivery of your late chief, Pabo."

"We cannot do it. We know not where he is."

"Then let justice take its course. This I will suffer : When each has drawn his lot from the cap, he shall bring it in his closed fist to me, and open it where I stand in the ray of sunlight. If he have an unmarked stick, he shall go forth by the door unmolested. But he who shall have the death's head in his hand shall tarry here. And when all six are selected, then will I suffer each in turn to be conducted to his home, there to bid farewell

to his family, and so to dispose of his wordly affairs as pleaseth him. I will allow each one hour to effect this ; then he will return hither. The first man who draws the bad lot shall be strung to the gallows to-day. If ye be wise men, he will be the only one who will go to make a chime of bells. If Pabo be delivered to me before noon to-morrow, then no second man shall hang. If he be given up on Monday before midday no third man shall swing. But—if ye remain obstinate, I will go on hanging you to the last man. Come, in your order, as ye sit ; draw to the bassinet and take out your lot. I lay the steel cap on what ye call the seat of your chief."

Then the old man advanced, he who had protested against the occupation of the chair—and said, "I am ready to die, whether in my bed or on the gibbet matters little to me. God grant that I be the man taken. My time at best is but short. Another year to me matters not a hair."

He walked to the bassinet, without hesitation drew his lot, carried it to the Norman—who stood in the sun-ray—and

unclosed his withered hand. In it was an unmarked stick.

"Pass forth," said Rogier.

"Nay," said the old man. "My son comes after me—let him draw."

A tall, well-built man walked boldly to the cap, drew, and approached the sunbeam.

"Open!" ordered Rogier.

He held a marked stick.

"On one side—food for the crows," said the Norman.

Then the old man fell on his knees. "I beseech you take me and spare him. He has a young wife and a child. He has life before him, mine is all behind."

"Away," ordered Rogier. "The lot decides—the judgment is with Heaven, not with me."

"Father," said the young man, "I am willing to die for my chief."

Then followed several who went free, and escaped into the open air, where they drew long breaths, as though their lungs had been cramped within.

The next who drew the death's head was a mean little man with pointed, foxy face and red hair. He fell into convul-

sions of terror, clung to Rogier, implored for life, promised to betray whatever he knew—only, unhappily, he did not know where Pabo was concealed, but undertook, if pardoned, to find out. The bishop's brother spurned him away with disgust. Then came three with blanks and were sent outside.

The third taken was Howel.

"One can but die once," said he, and shrugged his shoulders. "My old woman will have to look out for a second husband. May he be better than the first."

He stepped aside without the exhibition of much feeling, but avoided the whimpering wretch who had drawn the death's head before him.

"Hah!" said Iorwerth the Smith, as he opened his palm and disclosed the marked twig, "I thought something would fall to me for striking that blow which disabled the Captain's arm. Would to heaven I had aimed better and broken his skull! He did not know me, or I should have been hung before this." Singularly enough, the very next to draw was also one who drew an unlucky stick, and this was Morgan the Sacristan.

"Since the Sanctuary of David has been invaded, and the wild beast of the field tramples on the vineyard, I care not ; and now the secret of where is hid the rod of Cynwyl will perish with me."

Next came a whole batch who drew blanks, and gladly escaped with their necks.

The last to draw the death's head looked steadily at it, and said, " I dreamed last night that I came in for a large fortune. I have been elate all day. A fool is he who places faith in dreams."

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CHAPTER XV

TWO PEBBLES

TIDINGS of the blow to be struck, reaching the hearts of many families—six only at first, but with prospect of more afterwards—had spread through the tribal region. Those who had drawn the unmarked sticks hurried to their homes, not tarrying to learn who were all the unfortunates ; and although relieved for the present, were in fear lest they should be unfortunate at a subsequent drawing.

All knew that Pabo was in concealment, and that his place of concealment was known to none, not even to his wife or to Howel. They had not a clue as to where he was. Some supposed that he had fled to the mountains of Brecknock, others to Cardigan ; some, again, that he had attached himself to Griffith ap Rhys, who

was traversing South Wales, stirring up disaffection and preparing for a general rising of the Welsh against their oppressors.

Yet hardly half a dozen men desired that he should be taken, and thus free themselves from death. The great and heroic virtue of the Celt lies in his devotion to his chief, for whom he is ready at once to lay down his life.

The hideous prospect that lay before the unfortunate people of Caio was one of illimited decimation. Would Rogier weary of his barbarous work? Would it avail to send a deputation to the bishop? It was doubtful whether the latter was not as hard of heart as his lay brother.

Gwen, the wife of Howel, was as one stunned. She leaned with both hands against the wall of her house, her head drooping between them, with dry, glazed eyes, and for long speechless.

Morwen was now in Howel's house. She had returned to it.

She was pale, and quivering with emotion under the weight of great horror, unable to speak.

Her eyes were fixed on the despairing

woman, from whose lips issued a low moan, and whose bosom heaved with long-drawn, laborious breaths. Morwen was well aware what sacrifices the tribe was making and would have to make for her husband's safety, and this gave inexpressible pain to her.

The moans of the poor woman cut her to the heart. At length, unable to endure it longer, she went to her, put her arms round her, and drew her to herself. Then, all at once, with a cry, the wife of Howel shook herself free, and found words—

“Monday! It is on Monday that he must die, and that is our thirtieth wedding-day! For all these years we have been together, as one soul, and it will tear the heart out of my body—and to be hung on the gallows—the shame, the loss—and Howel so clever, so shrewd! Where has been his wit that he could not get free? He always had a cunning above other men. And on our wedding-day!” She ran to a coffer and opened it, and drew forth a knitted garment, such as we should nowadays call a jersey.

“See, see!” cried the wretched woman. “I have been fashioning this; a thought

of him is knitted into every loop I have made, and I have kissed it—kissed it a thousand times because it was for him. He feels the cold in the long winters, and I made this for him that he might be warm, and wherever he was, remember me and bear my kisses and my finger-work about him. And he must die, and shiver, and be cold in the grave! Nay, shiver and be cold hanging on the gallows, as the icy winds sway him. He shall wear my knitted garment. They will let me pass to him, and I will draw it over him.”

Then in at the door came the old man who had been left when his son was taken. He was supporting that son's wife, and at the same time was carrying her child, which she was incapable of sustaining. She was frantic with grief.

“I have brought one sorrowful woman to another,” said the old man. “This is Sheena. She must not see it. They are taking my son now to—— Keep her here, she is mad. She will run there, and if she sees, she will die. For the child's sake, pity her, make her live—calm her.”

She had been allowed an hour with her husband in their house, and then the

soldiers had led him away, bound his hands behind his back, and had conducted him towards the church.

She had followed with the child, crying, plucking at her hair with the one free hand, thrusting from her the old man who would hold her back, striving to reach, to retain her husband, her eyes blinded with terror and tears, her limbs giving way under her.

The five men confined within the courthouse heard her piercing cries, her entreaties to be allowed once more to kiss her husband, her screams as she was repulsed by the guards. They shuddered, and put their hands to their ears; but one, the fox-faced man, whose name was Madoc, burst into a torrent of curses and blasphemy till Morgan the Sacristan went to him in reproof, and then the wretched man turned on him with imprecations.

"Come now, man," said the smith, "why shouldst thou take on so frantically? We leave wives that we love and that love us; but thy old cat, good faith! I should esteem it a welcome release to be freed from her tongue and nails."

On nearing the gallows, where stood

Rogier, that captain ordered the removal of Sheena; and when she saw a ladder set up against the crosspiece that sustained the bell, her cries ceased, she reeled, and would have let the child drop had not her father-in-law caught it from her.

"One kiss—one last kiss! I have forgot something to say—let him bless his child!" she entreated.

Rogier hesitated and consented, on the condition that she should then be at once removed. Thereupon the desolate woman staggered to the foot of the gallows, threw her arms round her husband's neck; and the man who acted as executioner relaxed the rope that bound his wrists, that he might bring his hands before him and lay them on his infant's head. Then the death-doomed man raised his eyes to heaven and said, "The benediction and the strength of God and the help of our fathers David and Cynwyl be with thee, my son, and when thou art a man revenge thy father and thy wronged country."

At once the cord was drawn again, and his hands rebound. The old man took his daughter-in-law in one arm whilst bearing the babe in the other, and seeing



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that consciousness was deserting Sheena, hurried her to the house of Howel. There, after a moment of dazed looking about her, she sank senseless on the floor.

Morwen flew to her assistance, and Howel's wife somewhat rallied from her stupefaction.

At that same moment in burst Angarad, the wife of fox-faced Madoc.

"Where is she?" she shouted, her eyes glaring, her hair bristling with rage. "She is here—she—the wife of our chief! Are we all to be dragged to the gallows because of him? Is every woman to become a widow? He call himself a priest! Why, his Master gave His life for His sheep, and he—ours—fleeth and hideth his head, whilst those whom he should guard are being torn by the wolves."

"Silence, woman!" exclaimed the old man wrathfully. "I joy that my son has given up his life to save his chief."

"But I am not content to surrender my Madoc," yelled the beldame. "Let us have the hated Saxon or the worse Norman to rule over us, rather than one who skulks and dares not show his face. My Madoc will be hung to-morrow, as

they have hung Sheena's man now. I have seen it. They pulled him up."

"Be silent," shouted the old man, and tried to shut her mouth.

"I will not be silent. I saw it all. They drew him up, and then a man sprang from the ladder and upon his shoulders and stamped."

A cry of agony from the wife of Howel, who flung out her hands, as before, against the wall, and stayed herself there. Sheena heard nothing—she was but returning to consciousness.

"Why do you not bring him back?" asked the hag, facing Morwen with fists clenched, fangs exposed, and eyes glaring. "Why do you keep him hidden, that we all may be widows—and you be happy with your man? What shall I do without my Madoc? Who will support me? Am I young enough to maintain myself? Is the whole tribe to be dragged down, that you and your husband may live at ease and be merry?"

"Woman," said Morwen, trembling, "I do not know where he is concealed."

"Then find him, and let him come forward to save us all. Shame, I say,

shame on him!—the false shepherd—the hireling—who fleeth and careth not for the sheep!”

The rattle of arms was heard, and at the sound Morwen slipped out of the room into the inner apartment, that she might not be seen.

Immediately two men-at-arms entered, leading Howel between them.

“He is granted one hour,” said the man who could speak a few words of Welsh. “On Monday he dies.”

“Clear the room!” said the old man; and to the soldier: “Remove this frantic woman.” He indicated Angarad; and he himself, with their assistance, drew her—swearing, struggling, spluttering with rage—from the house. Sheena remained where she had been laid—as yet barely conscious. Howel’s wife dropped into her husband’s arms, moaning, still powerless to weep.

In the inner chamber, dimly lighted by a small window covered with bladder in place of glass, on a bed sat Morwen, with her hands clasped between her knees, looking despairingly before her. Every word of the cruel woman had cut her

heart as the stab of an envenomed poignard.

Did Pabo know what was being done at Caio? No—assuredly not. She, who had read his thoughts and knew his heart, was well aware that he would readily die himself rather than that any of his people should suffer. He knew nothing. They, with a rare exception only, would meet their fate, the men give their necks to the halter, the women submit to be made widows rather than that their master and chief should fall into the hands of his enemies. Brave, true, faithful hearts! But was it right that they should be called on to endure such sacrifices? She shuddered. What! would she have him taken and die an ignominious death? Him whom she loved better than any one—with a one, soul-filling love? Could she endure such a sacrifice as that? Then she heard the step of Howel coming to the door.

He entered and was with her alone.

“Morwen,” said he, in a low voice, “I shall be able shortly to do no more for my dear chief. Should you ever see him again, tell him from us all—all but perhaps

one who is beside himself with fear—that we die willingly. But with him I can no more communicate. That must be done by you. It is expedient that he should fly farther; search will be made everywhere for him. Where he is, that I know not, though I may have my suspicion. Do this—at nightfall mount the valley of the Annell till you come to the stone of Cynwyl.”

“The stone of Cynwyl,” repeated Morwen mechanically.

“Take a pebble out of the brook and place it upon the rock. That will be a sign that he is not safe, and must fly to other quarters.”

“What other tokens be there?”

“Two pebbles was to be the sign that all was safe and he was to return. That is not the case at this present time. Remember, then—One pebble.”

“And two stones call him hither?”

“Two pebbles. But remember, One only.”

“Two pebbles,” said Morwen, but so that none heard it; it was said to her own heart.

CHAPTER XVI

A SUMMONS

THE days spent on the mountain had not been as cheerless as that first night. The fire burned now continually on the hearth, the light peat smoke was dissipated at once by the wind, which was never still at the fall of the year at the altitude where was planted the hovel of the hermit.

The supply of food was better than at first. One night Pabo had found a she-goat attached to a bush near the stone of Cynwyl; and he had taken her to his habitation, where she supplied him with milk. On another night he had found on a rock a rolled-up blanket, and had experienced the comfort at night of this additional covering.

But no tidings whatever had reached him of what went on in Caio. This was

satisfactory, and his anxiety for his flock abated. But he knew that the enemy was quartered in the valley, because no call had come to him to return to it. At nights he would steal along the mountain-top that he might, from Bronffin, look down on the sleeping valley, with its scattered farms and hamlets ; and on Sunday morning he even ventured within hearing of the church bell, that he might in spirit unite with his flock in prayer. He concluded that one of the assistant priests from a chapelry under the great Church was ministering there in his stead. He knew that his people would be thinking of him, as he was of them.

During the day he made long excursions to the north, among the wild wastes that stretched interminably away before his eyes, and offered him a region where he might lie hid should his present hiding-place be discovered.

None could approach the hut unobserved, a long stretch of moor was commanded by it, and the rocks in the rear afforded means, should he observe an enemy approach, of getting away beyond their reach into the intricacies of the wilderness.

At first Pabo was oppressed by the sense of loneliness. No human face was seen, no human voice heard. But this passed, and he became conscious of a calm coming over his troubled heart, and with it a sense of freedom from care and childlike happiness.

The elevation at which he lived, the elasticity of the air, the brilliance of the light, unobstructed, as below, by mountains, tended towards this. Moreover, he was alone with Nature, that has an inspiring effect on the heart, whilst at the same time tranquillising the nerves—tranquillising all the cares and worries bred of life among men. It was a delight to Pabo to wander through the heather to some brow that overhung the Ystrad-Towy or the valley of the Cothi, and look down from his treeless altitude on the rolling masses of wood, now undergoing glorious change of colour under the touch of autumn. Or else to venture into the higher, unoccupied mountain glens, where the rowan and the rose-bramble were scarlet with their berries, and there he seemed to be moving in the land of coral.

It was a delight to observe the last flowers of the year, the few stray harebells that still hung and swayed in the air, the little ivy-leaved campanula by the water, the sturdy red robin, the gorse persistent in bloom. He gathered a few blossoms to adorn his wretched hovel, and in it they were as a smile.

The birds were passing overhead, migrating south, yet the ring-ouzel was still there; the eagle and hawk spired aloft on their look-out for prey; the plover and curlew piped mournfully, and the owl hooted.

The insects were retiring underground for the winter. Pabo had not hitherto noticed the phases of life around him, below that of man; now it broke on him as a wonder, and filled him with interest, to see a world on which hitherto he had not thought to direct his observation. There is no season in the year in which the lights are more varied and more beautiful than in autumn, the slant rays painting the rocks vermilion, glorifying the dying foliage, enhancing the colour of every surviving flower.

But the fall of the year is one in which

Nature weeps and sighs over the prospect of death ; and there came on Pabo days of blinding fog and streaming rain. Then he was condemned to remain within, occasionally looking forth into the whirls of drifting vapour, charged with a strange dank scent, or at the lines of descending water. He milked his goat, collected food for it, and heaped up his fire.

Then it was that sad thoughts came over him, forebodings of ill ; and he mused by his hearth, looking into the glow, listening to the moan of the wind or the drizzle of the rain, and the eternal drip, drip from the eaves.

He had thus sat for hours one day, interrupting his meditations only by an occasional pace to the door to look out for a break in the weather, when there came upon him with a shock of surprise the recollection that there was more in the hermit's scroll than he had considered at first. Not much. He unfurled it, and beside the bequest of the hut, only these words were added : " For a commission look below my bed."

What was the meaning of this ? It was strange that till now Pabo had

given no thought to these concluding words.

Now he thrust the fire together, cast on some dry bunches of gorse that lit the interior with a golden light, and he drew the bed from the place it had occupied in the corner of the chamber.

Beneath it was nothing but the beaten earth that had never been disturbed.

The bed itself was but a plank resting on two short rollers, to sustain it six inches above the soil. Nothing had been concealed beneath the plank, between it and the ground—no box, no roll of parchment. Nothing even was written in the dust.

Pabo took a flaming branch and examined the place minutely, but in vain.

Then he threw off the blanket and skins that covered the pallet. He shook them, and naught dropped out. He took the pillow and explored it. The contents were but moss ; yet he picked the moss to small pieces, searching for the commission and finding none. Then he drew away the logs on which the plank had rested. They might be hollow and contain something. Also in vain.

Thoroughly perplexed to know what

could have been the hermit's meaning, Pabo now replaced the rollers in their former position and raised the plank to lean it upon them once more.

At this something caught his eye—some scratches on the lower surface of the board. He at once turned it over, and to his amazement saw that this under side of the pallet was scored over with lines and with words, drawn on the wood with a heated skewer, so that they were burnt in.

The fire had sunk to a glow—he threw on more gorse. As it blazed he saw that the lines were continuous and had some meaning, though winding about. Apparently a plan had been sketched on the board. Beneath were these words, burnt in—

*Thesaurus, a Romanis antiquis absconditus, in antro
Ogofau.*

Then followed in Welsh some verses—

*In the hour of Cambria's need,
When thou seest Dyfed bleed,
Raise the prize and break her chains ;
Use it not for selfish gains.*

The lines that twisted, then ran straight,
then bent were, apparently, a plan.

Pabo studied it. At one point, whence the line started, he read, *Ingressio*; then a long stroke, and *Perge*; further a turn, and here was written *vertitur in sinistram*. There was a fork there, in fact the line forked in several places, and the plan seemed to be intricate. Then a black spot was burnt deeply into the wood, and here was written: *Cave, puteum profundum*. And just beyond this several dots with the burning skewer, and the inscription, *Auri moles prægrandis*.

Pabo was hardly able at first to realise the revelation made. He knew the Ogofau well. It was hard by Pumpsaint—a height, hardly a mountain, that had been scooped out like a volcanic crater by the Romans during their occupation of Britain. From the crater thus formed, they had driven adits into the bowels of the mountain. Thence it was reported they had extracted much gold. But the mine had been unworked since their time. The Welsh had not sufficient energy or genius in mining to carry on the search after the most precious of ores. And superstition had invested the deserted works with terrors. Thither it was said

that the Five Saints, the sons of Cynyr of the family of Cunedda, had retired in a thunderstorm for shelter. They had penetrated into the mine and had lost their way, and taking a stone for a bolster, had laid their heads on it and fallen asleep. And there they would remain in peaceful slumber till the return of King Arthur, or till a truly apostolic prelate should occupy the throne of St. David. An inquisitive woman, named Gwen, led by the devil, sought to spy on the saintly brothers in their long sleep, but was punished by also losing her way in the passages of the mine; and there she likewise remained in an undying condition, but was suffered to emerge in storm and rain, when her vaporous form—so it was reported—might be seen sailing about the old gold mine, and her sobs and moans were borne far off on the wind.

In consequence, few dared in broad daylight to visit the Ogofau, none ever ventured to penetrate the still open mouth of the mine.

Pabo was not devoid of superstition, yet not abjectly credulous. If what he now saw was the result of research by the

hermit, then it was clear that where one man had gone another might also go, and with the assistance of the plan discover the hidden treasure which the Romans had stored, but never removed.

And yet, as Pabo gazed at the plan and writing, he asked was it not more likely that the old hermit had been a prey to hallucinations, and that there was no substance behind this parade of a **secret**? Was it not probable that in the thirty years' dreaming in this solitude his fancies had become to him realities; that musing in the long winter nights on the woes of his country he had come on the thought, what an assistance it would be to it had the Romans not extricated all the ore from the rich veins of the Ogofau! Then, going a little further, had imagined that in their hasty withdrawal from Britain, they might not have removed all the gold found. Advancing mentally, he might have supposed that the store still remaining underground might be recovered, and the entire fabric of the plan, with its directions, would have been the final stage in this fantastic progress. How could the recluse have penetrated the passages of the mine?

It was true enough that the Ogofau were accessible from Mallaen without going near any habitation of man. It was conceivable that by night the old man had prosecuted his researches, which had finally been crowned with success.

Pabo felt a strong desire to consult Howel. He started up, and after having replaced the plank and covered it with the bedding, left the hut and made his way down into the valley of the Annell, to the stone of Cynwyl.

Notwithstanding the drizzle and the gathering night, he pushed on down the steep declivity, and on approaching the brawling stream passed out of the envelope of vapour.

As he reached the great erratic block he saw what at first he thought was a dark bush, or perhaps a black sheep against it.

All at once, at the sound of his step on the rocks, the figure moved, rose, and he saw before him a woman with extended arms.

"Pabo!" she said in thrilling tones.
"Here they are—the two pebbles!"

"Morwen!"

He sprang towards her, with a rush of blood from his heart.

She made no movement to meet his embrace.

"Oh, Pabo! hear all first, and then decide if I am to lose you for ever."

In tremulous tones, but with a firm heart, she narrated to him all that had taken place. This was now Sunday. Two men had been hung. On the morrow Howel would be suspended beside them. These executions would continue till the place of retreat of the Archpriest was revealed, and he had been taken.

She did not repeat to him the words of Angarad, Madoc's wife—now widow.

"Pabo!" she said, and tears were oozing between every word she uttered, "it is I—I who bring you this tidings! I—I who offer you these two pebbles! I—I who send you to your death!"

"Ay, my Morwen," he said, and clasped her to his heart, "it is because you love me that you do this. It is right. I return to Caio with you at once."

CHAPTER XVII

BETRAYED

A CONGREGATION exceptionally large under existing circumstances assembled on Sunday morning before the church of Caio. Fear lest the Normans and English quartered in the place should find fresh occasion against the unhappy people, were they to absent themselves as on previous Sundays, led a good many to swallow their dislike of the man forced upon them as pastor, and to put in an appearance in the house of God.

They stood about, waiting for the bell to sound, and looked shrinkingly at the hideous spectacle of the two men suspended by the bell, and at the vacant spaces soon to be occupied by others. At the foot of the gallows sat Sheena moaning, and swaying herself to her musical and rhythmic keening.

Around the court or council-house stood guards. All those standing about knew that within it were Howel and three others, destined to execution during the week.

They spoke to each other in low tones, and looks of discouragement clouded every face. What could these inhabitants of a lone green basin in the heart of the mountains do to rid themselves of their oppressors and lighten their miserable condition? Griffith ap Rhys, the Prince, had appeared among them for a moment, flashed on their sight, and had then disappeared. Of him they had heard no more.

Some went into the church, prayed there awhile, and came out again. The new Archpriest had not yet put in an appearance.

It was then whispered that he had left Caio during the week, and was not returned.

Sarcastic comments passed : such was the pastor thrust on them who neglected his duties.

But Cadell was not to blame.

He had left Llawhaden, and had made

a diversion to Carreg Cennen by the bishop's orders. The road had been bad and his horse had fallen lame, so that he had been unable to reach his charge on Saturday afternoon. To travel by night in such troubled times was out of the question, and he did not reach Caio till the evening closed in on the Sunday.

It was not, however, too dark for him to see that the frame supporting the bell presented an unusual appearance. He walked towards it, and then observed a woman leaning against one of the beams of support.

"Who are you? What has been done here?" he asked.

"There is my man—I am Sheena. They have hung him, and I am afraid of the night ravens. They will come and pluck out his eyes. I went to see my babe, and when I returned there was one perched on his shoulder. I drove it away with stones. There will be a moon, and I shall see them when they come."

"Who are you?"

"I am Sheena—that is my man."

"Go home; this is no place for you."

"I have no home. I had a home, but

the Norman chief drove us out, me and my man, that he might have it for himself; and we have been in a cowshed since—but I will not go there. I want no home. What is a home to me without him?”

“Who has done this? Why has this been done?” asked Cadell.

“Oh, they, the Saxons, have done it because we will not give up our priest, our chief. And my man was proud to die for him. So are the rest—all but Madoc.”

“The rest—what do you mean?”

“They will hang them all, down to the last man, for none will betray the chief. They will go singing to the gallows. There was but Madoc, and him the devils will carry away; I have seen one, little and black, slinking around. I will sit here and drive devils away, lest coming for Madoc they take my man in mistake.”

Cadell was shocked and incensed.

He hasted at once to the house in which Rogier was quartered. He knew that he had turned out the owners that he might have it to himself.

Rogier and two men were within. They had on the table horns and a jug of mead, and had been drinking.

Said one man to his fellow, "The Captain shall give me Sheena, when she has done whimpering over her Welshman."

"Nay," quoth the other, "she is a morsel for my mouth, that has been watering for her. He cannot refuse her to me."

"You, Luke! You have not served him so long as have I."

"That may be, but I have served him better."

"Prove me that."

"I can interpret for him—I know sufficient Welsh for that."

"Bah! I would not dirty my mouth with that gibberish."

"You have not the tongue wherewith to woo her."

"But I have a hand wherewith to grip her."

"The Captain shall decide between us."

"Be it so. Now, Captain, which of us is to comfort Sheena in her widowhood? It is all cursed perversity of Luke to fancy this woman. Before long there will be a score of other widows for him to pick among. There is even now that wild cat, Angarad."



"I thank you. Let the Captain judge."

Then said Rogier: "Ye be both good and useful men. And in such a matter as this, let Fortune decide between ye. There is a draught-board; settle it between you by the chance of the game."

"It is well. We will."

The men seated themselves at the board. The draught-men employed were knuckle-bones of sheep, some blackened.

While thus engaged, Cadell came in.

"Rogier!" he exclaimed, "what is the meaning of this? There be men hung to my belfry."

"Ay! And ere long there shall be such a peal of bells there as will sound throughout Wales, and this shall be their chime: 'Pabo, priest, come again!' By the Conqueror's paunch, I will make it ring in every ear, so that he who knows where he is hidden will come and declare it."

"Consider! You make the place intolerable for me to perform my duty in."

"Thy duty! That sits light on thy shoulders, I wot. Here have the poor sheep been waiting for their shepherd all the morn, and he was away."

"I have been with the bishop."

"I care not. I shall find Pabo ere long."

"But his fatherliness holds that Pabo the Archpriest was burnt."

"And we know that he was not."

"If there be found one calling himself Pabo—and he is in no mighty desire that such should be discovered—then let him be esteemed an impostor—a false Pabo."

"How so?"

The chaplain looked at the men and did not answer.

"But none has as yet been discovered," said Rogier.

"Do not press to find one—not in this manner."

"I shall not desist till he is given up. I have said so, and will be as good as my word."

As he spoke, a face looked in at the door, then, after an inspection, a body followed, and Goronwy approached stealthily.

He stood before Cadell with his eyes twinkling with malevolence, and his sharp, white face twitching with excitement; nodding his head, he said—

"He is here—he, Pabo, and he also

whom the great Baron, the bishop's brother, desires ; they are both here. Know well that it is I who have told you this, and it is I who claim the reward."

"The reward!"

"Ay, the Archpriesthood, which thou wilt resign for a rich benefice. Let me tell thee—here thou canst not live. They will hate thee, they will not receive the Sacraments from thy hand, they will baptize their children themselves rather than commit them to thee. The Word of God, coming from thy lips, will have lost all savour. They will die and be buried on the mountains under cairns, as in the old pagan times, rather than have thee bless their graves. No—this is no place for thee. What the Captain has done has driven barbed iron into their souls ; they will have none of thee. But I am of the stock of Cunedda—me they will welcome, and I will be the bishop's henchman."

"Pabo here!" exclaimed Cadell, and looked round at Rogier, who had understood nothing that had passed in this brief colloquy, as it had been spoken in Welsh. The man who did understand the tongue

was too deeply engrossed in his game to hearken.

"Ay, ay, Pabo is here—he and Morwen. I have just seen them; they came together down the glen, and are in the house of Howel ap John. Be speedy and have them secured, or they may again escape. Pabo is for you—and for him," he pointed to the Norman captain, "for him the comely Morwen, whom he has been looking for. Say, didst thou obtain for me the promise from the bishop?"

"What says this misshapen imp?" asked Rogier.

Then the young man sidled up to him, and, plucking at his sleeve and pointing through the door, said, "Là—Pabo! Morwen, là!"

"By the soul of the Conqueror," exclaimed the Norman, "if that be so, Pabo shall be strung up at the door of his church at daybreak!"

Turning to his men, with his hand he brushed the knucklebones off the board. "Ye shall conclude the game later—we have higher sport in view now."

The men started to their feet with oaths, angry at the interruption, especially he

who considered that he had won an advantage over his fellow.

"I would have cornered him in three moves!" he shouted.

"Nay, not thou; I should have taken thy men in leaps!"

"Another time," said Rogier. "The man we seek has run into our hands." Then to the boy, "Where is he hiding?"

Goronwy understood the question by the action of his hands, and replied in the few words he had picked up of French, "Là—maison Howel."

"He shall be swung at once," said Rogier, "and then the first object on which the eyes of all will rest when they come out of their houses with the morrow's sun will be this Archpriest they have been hiding from me."

"Nay," said Cadell, "that may not be. I have orders to the contrary under the hand and seal of the bishop." He unfolded the instructions.

Rogier cursed. "Well," said he, "Pabo to me matters but little—so long as I lay my hand on Morwen."

CHAPTER XVIII

CAREG CENNEN

BEFORE dawn Pabo was on his way, bound, to Careg Cennen, riding between four soldiers. He had been taken in the house of Howel. It had been his intention to deliver himself up early on the morrow ; but he was forestalled.

He regretted this, for more reasons than one. He had been unable to make final arrangements for the protection of Morwen, and he had been unable to communicate with Howel as he desired, relative to the secret of the treasure in the Roman gold-mines.

The owls were hooting and night-jars screaming as the cavalcade proceeded along the Sarn Helen towards the broad valley of the Towy by that of its tributary the Dulais. As they reached the main

river, the dawn was lightening behind the Brecknock Mountains, and the water sliding down toward the sea shone cold as steel.

With daylight men were met upon the road, and occasionally a woman; the latter invariably, the former for the most part, fled at the sight of the armed men. But some, less timorous, remained, and recognising the Archpriest, saluted him with respect and with exclamations of lamentation at seeing him in the hands of the common enemy. At Llandeilo the river was crossed, and Pabo was conveyed up a steep ascent into the tributary valley of the Cennen. But this stream makes a great loop, and the troopers thrust their horses over the spur of hill about which the torrent sweeps.

Presently the castle came in view, very new and white, constructed of limestone, on a crag of the same substance, that rises precipitously for five hundred feet sheer out of the ravine and the brawling stream that laves the foot of the crag.

After a slight dip the track led up a bold stony rise to the castle gate.

The situation is of incomparable wildness

and majesty. Beyond the ravine towers up the Mynydd Du, the Black Mountain, clothed in short heather, to cairn-topped ridges, two thousand feet above the sea, the flanks seamed with descending threads of water ; while further south over its shoulder are seen purple hills in the distance. A solitary sycamore here and there alone stands against the wind on the ridge about which the Cennen whispers far below.

The bishop had already arrived at the castle. He had followed up his emissary pretty quickly, anxious that his own view of the case should be maintained in the event of the capture of Pabo.

He and Gerald of Windsor were on excellent terms. Between them they were to divide the land, so much to the crook and so much to the sword ; and whom the latter did not consume were to be delivered over to feel the weight of the crozier. In the subjugation of Wales, in the breaking of the spirit of the people, Church and castle must combine and play each other's game.

The staff of the bishop has a crook above and a spike below, to signify the

double power that resides in his hands—that of drawing and that of goading. The time for the exercise of the curved head might come in the future, that for the driving of the sharp end was the present, thought Bernard.

No sooner did he learn of the arrival of Pabo than he bade that he should be brought into his presence, in the room given to him by his host on whom he had intruded himself—a room facing south, overhanging the precipice.

The weather was mild, and the sun shone in at the window. There was no fire.

“So!” said the prelate, fixing his grey, dark-rimmed irises on the prisoner, “you are he who give yourself out to be the Archpriest of Caio?”

“I am he,” answered Pabo.

The bishop assured himself that the strongly built upright man before him was bound and could not hurt him; and he said to the attendants, “Go forth outside the door and leave this dissembler with me. Yet remain within call, and one bid Gerald, the Master, come to me speedily.”

The men withdrew.

"I wonder," said Bernard, and his words hissed through the gap in his teeth, "I wonder now at thy audacity. If indeed I held thee to be Pabo, the late Archpriest of Caio, who smote me, his bishop, on the mouth and drew my blood, there would be no other course for me but to deliver thee over to the secular arm, and for such an act of treason against thy superior in God—the stake would be thy due."

"I am he, Lord Bishop, who struck thee on the mouth. The insult was intolerable. The old law provided—an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. If thou goest by the law of Moses deal with me as seems right. What the Gospel law is, maybe thou art too recent in Holy Orders and too new to the study of the Sacred Scriptures to be aware."

"Thou art insolent. But as I do not for a moment take thee to be the deceased Pabo——"

"Lord Bishop, none doubt that I am he."

Bernard looked at him from head to foot.

"Methinks a taller man by three fingers' breadth, and leaner in face certainly, as

also browner in complexion, and with cheekbones standing out more forcibly."

Pabo hardly knew what to think of the bishop's words. It occurred to him that the prelate was beating about for some excuse for pardoning him, whilst saving his dignity.

He smiled and said, "If it be a matter of doubt with thee, whether I be indeed Pabo——"

"Oh! by no means," interrupted Bernard, "I have no manner of doubt. On the surest testimony I know that the Archpriest Pabo was consumed by fire from heaven. This is known far and wide. His Majesty the King is aware of it; it is a matter of common talk."

"Yet is it not true."

"It is most assuredly true. I have the testimony of credible eye-witnesses."

"Yet," said Pabo, "my own wife knows me."

"Of her I can believe anything," said Bernard, thrusting his seat a little back, to put more space between himself and the prisoner.

"Hearken unto me," said the bishop; "I have heard say of these Welsh that

they keep their King Arthur somewhere, ready to produce him in the hour of need, to fight against their rightful lord and sovereign, the King of England. And I warrant ye—they will turn out some scullion knave, and put a tinsel crown about his head, and shout 'God save King Arthur!' and make believe it is he come from his long sleep to fight against us. But we are prepared against such make-believes and mumming kings. And so, in like manner, when Pabo, Archpriest of Caio, is dead, burned to a cinder, as it has been most surely reported to us, then up starts such as you and assume to be what you are not, so as to fan the flame of discontent among the people, and inspire them with hopes that can never be fulfilled; and so persuade them to resist rightful authority. Have I not appointed my late chaplain to be Archpriest in the room of that unhappy man who, for temerity in lifting his hand against his ecclesiastical father, was evidently, before the eyes of all men, smitten by Heaven? I, of all men, I, who was struck in the face, and thereby lost my teeth, have a right to recognise the impious man who smote me.

But I tell thee I do not identify thee. Further, I am ready to declare, and if need be to swear, that thou art not the man. Thou art but a sorry makeshift. Who should know him, if not I?"

"My dear people of Caio, whose pastor I have been, among whom I have gone in and out, will know me well enough. Confront me with them and the matter will be settled at once."

"Nay—the word of a Welshman is not to be trusted. They will combine to bolster up a lie. Thou art an impostor, a false Pabo. That is certain." Then he turned his hands one over the other: "If thou wert the real Pabo, then be very sure of this: I would deliver thee over to the secular arm to be burned in verity—and only Norman and English soldiers should surround the fire, and they would see that thou wast in truth this time burned to a coal. But as I do not and will not hold this, I ask thee, for thine own sake, to acknowledge there has been a plot to thrust thee forward—that thy people are in a league to accept thee as their priest and chief, knowing very well that their true priest and chief was burned in his

house. Confess this, and I will use my endeavour to get thee thrust away into some distant part, where no harm shall come to thee. Nay, further," the bishop brightened up, "I will even keep thee about myself and advance thee to honour, and I will put thee into a fat benefice at the other extremity of the diocese, if thou wilt constantly affirm that thou art not Pabo, and never wast Pabo, neither ever knew him—but hast been mistaken for him through some chance resemblance."

"Although a Welshman," said the Archpriest, with a curl of the lip, "and, as thou sayest, ready with lies, I will not say that."

"Then take the consequences," exclaimed the bishop. "I give one minute in which to resolve thee. Admit that thou art an impostor, and I will do what I can for thee; refuse—and—and——"

"Do your worst," exclaimed Pabo indignantly. "What your object is I cannot devise; but, be it what it may, I will not help with a falsehood. I am Pabo, still Archpriest and head of the tribe of the land of Caio."

"Then," said the bishop, with harshness

in his tone but with no alteration in his mask-like face, "be content, as simulating the Pabo who struck his ecclesiastical father in the face and knocked out one tooth and broke another, to receive such punishment as is due to so treasonable an action."

"If we two met as plain Christian people, living under the Gospel," said Pabo, "I would say the act was done under provocation; but it was an unworthy act, and I, who committed it, express my regret and ask for pardon of my brother Christian."

"And I," said the bishop, "as a Christian man and a prelate of the Holy Roman Church, do cheerfully give forgiveness. Yet inasmuch as it is unwise that——"

"I see," said Pabo; "a forgiveness that is no forgiveness at all. The transgression must be wiped out in blood."

"The Church never sheds blood," said Bernard. "She hands over stubborn offenders to the secular arm. Here it comes—in at the door."

The hand of Gerald of Windsor was thrust in, followed by the man himself.

"See here," said Bernard, addressing

the Baron and pointing to Pabo, "this is a man who sets himself up to be a leader among the rebellious Welsh, and is stirring up of hot blood and fomenting of intrigue."

"Ay," said Gerald, "I have tidings come this day that the beggars are rising everywhere. They have among them their Prince Griffith ap Rhys."

"And here," said the prelate, "is one of his agents. This man gives himself out to be a certain person whom he is not, and he has come among the people of Caio to bid them take up arms. But happily my brother Rogier is there."

"What shall we do with him?" asked Gerald.

"Beau Sieur," said the prelate, "with that I have naught to do. Sufficient that I place him—a dangerous fellow—in your hands. And mark you, a priest as well as an agitator, one to arouse the religious fanaticism of the people against the Church as well as against the Crown."

"What shall be done with him? Cut off his head?"

"Nay, I pray shed no blood."

"Shall we hang him?"

"I think," said the bishop, after musing

a moment, "that it would be well were he simply to disappear. Let him not be hung, so that, perchance, he might be recognised, but rather suffer him to be cast into one of the dungeons where none may ever set eye on him till he be but bones, and there be forgot."

CHAPTER XIX

FORGOTTEN?

PABO was hurried away, along a corridor, down a flight of steps, through the courtyard, and was thrust into a dungeon at the base of a tower on the east side of the castle. He had to descend into it by steps, and then the heavy oak door was shut and locked.

The floor was of the limestone rock, with some earth on it; the walls new, and smelling of mortar. One slit, far up, admitted a ray of light, and beneath the door was a space of as much as two finger-breadths between it and the stone sill. No preparations had been made for his reception. No straw or fern was littered for a bed, nor was a pitcher of water set for him, that he might quench his thirst. Pabo was hungry; he had

partaken of nothing since he left Caio save a crust that had been given him at Llanwrda on his way. At Llandeilo the soldiers had purposely avoided the town, and they had halted nowhere on the way except at the place Llanwrda, where they had given him a portion of their breakfast.

Pabo supposed that he was to remain in confinement as long as it suited the convenience of the bishop. He was far from fathoming the purpose of the prelate in endeavouring to cajole or frighten him into a denial of his own identity. Had he known the figure Bernard was endeavouring to cut at his expense, he would have laughed aloud and made his dungeon walls ring.

He cast himself in a corner against the wall, and waited in the expectation of his jailer coming in before long with a truss of straw, some bread and water, and possibly chains for his hands or feet. But hours passed, and no one came.

From where he sat he could see feet go by his door, and it seemed to him that towards evening these were the feet of women.

No sentinel paced the court outside his

doorway. He heard human voices occasionally, but could distinguish no words.

The evening closed in, and still none attended to him. Feeling in his pouch he found some dried corn from the hermit's store. When wandering on the mountains he had been wont thus to provide himself, and happily there remained still some unconsumed. With this he filled his mouth.

He waited on as darkness settled in, so that he could but just distinguish his window and the gap below the door, and at length fell into a troubled sleep.

During the night he woke with the cold, and groped for the blankets he had been accustomed to draw over him in the cell on Mallaen, but here in the prison of Careg Cennen none were provided. He felt stiff and chilled in his bones with lying on the bare rock. He turned from side to side, but could find no relief.

Surely it was not the intention of Gerald of Windsor to detain him there without the modicum of comforts supplied to the worst of criminals. He had not offended the Norman baron. If he were not Pabo, as the bishop insisted, why was he dealt

with so harshly? He had not done anything to show that he was a fanner of rebellion. Against him not a particle of evidence could be adduced.

The thought that he carried with him the great secret of the hermit also troubled him. It is said that no witch can die till she has communicated her hidden knowledge to some sister.

It was to Pabo a thought insupportable that he was unable to impart the secret deposited with him to some one who could use the knowledge for the good of his oppressed countrymen.

Hitherto the attempts made by the Welsh to shake off their yoke had been doomed to failure, largely because of their inability to purchase weapons and stores that might furnish their levies and maintain them in the field. It was not that in the Cambrian Mountains there had been deficiency in resolution and lack of heroism; but it was the poverty of Wales that had stood no chance against the wealth of England.

For himself Pabo cared little, but he was deeply concerned that he had no means of conveying the secret that had

been entrusted to him to those who could make good use of it.

He dozed off again in cold and hunger, and fell to dreaming that he had lit on an ingot of pure gold, so large and so weighty that he could not himself lift it; and opened his eyes to see a golden bar indeed before him, but it was one of sunlight, painted on the wall by the rising orb as it shone through the slit that served as window. He waited now with impatience, trusting that some one would come to him. Yet time passed and none arrived.

He moved to one of the steps, seated himself thereon, and looked at the light between the bottom of the door and the sill. Again he saw what he supposed to be women's feet pass by, and presently, but after a long interval, return; and this time he knew that the feet belonged to a woman, for she stopped where he could see, set down an earthenware pitcher, and exchanged some words with a soldier, one of the garrison. He could see the pitcher nearly to the handle, but not the hand that set it down and raised it. Yet he distinguished the skirts of the dress and the tones of voice as those of a woman.

Presently he again heard a voice, that belonged to a female, and by the intonation was sure that what she spoke was in Welsh. She was calling and strewing crumbs, for some fell near his door. Immediately numerous pigeons arrived and pecked up what was cast for them. He could see their red legs and bobbing heads, and wished that some of the fragments might have been for him.

He had hardly formed the wish before a crust, larger than any given to the birds, fell against his door, and there was a rush of pigeons towards it. Pabo put forth two fingers through the opening, and drew the piece of bread within. He had hardly secured this, before another piece fell in the same place, and once more, in the same manner, he endeavoured to capture it. But unhappily it had rebounded just beyond his reach, and after vain efforts he would have had to relinquish it wholly to the pigeons, had not feet rapidly approached, and a hand been lowered, that touched the crust and thrust it hastily under the door, and then pushed in another even larger.

After this the feet went away. But still the pigeons fluttered and pecked till

they had consumed the last particle cast to them.

Pabo ate the pieces of bread ravenously.

He was not thirsty. The coolness and moisture of the prison prevented him from becoming parched. What he had received was not, indeed, much, but it was sufficient to take off the gnawing pain that had consumed his vitals.

Now for the first time he realised the force of the prelate's words when he had bidden Gerald of Windsor cast him—Pabo—into a dungeon, there to be *forgotten*. Forgotten he was to be, ignored as a human being immured in this subterranean den. He was to be left there, totally unattended and unprovided for. Of this he was now convinced, both because of the neglect he had undergone, and also because of the attempt made by some Welshwoman, unknown to him, surreptitiously to supply him with food. This she would not have done had she not been aware of the fate intended for him. He was to be left to die of cold and hunger and thirst, and was not to leave the prison save as a dwindled, emaciated wreck, with the life driven out of him by privation of

all that is necessary for the support of life. He was now well assured of what was purposed, and also, and equally assured, that he had in the castle some friend who would employ all her feminine craft to deliver him from such a fate.

Slowly, tediously the day passed. Still, occasionally voices were audible, but no feet approached the dungeon doorway. Overhead there were chambers, but the prison was vaulted with stone, and even were there persons occupying an upper storey, they were not likely to be heard by one below.

It was, perhaps, fortunate that for some time on the mountain Pabo had led a very frugal life, and had contented himself with parched grain, or girdle-cakes of his own grinding and making. Yet to these had been added the milk of a goat, and for this he now craved. He thought of his poor Nanny bleating, distressed with her milk; he thought of how she had welcomed him when he returned to the cell. Poor Nanny! What would he not now give for a draught of her sweet, sustaining milk!

Another night passed, and again in the morning there ensued the feeding of the

pigeons and therewith a fall of crusts within his reach by the door.

During the day he heard a clatter of hoofs in the courtyard, and by seating himself on the lowest step in his vault, leaning one elbow on another, and bringing first eye and then ear near to the gap below the door, he saw and heard sufficient to lead him to suppose that the bishop was leaving Careg Cennen, to return to his own castle of Llawhaden.

He could even distinguish his strident voice, and catch a few words uttered by him, as he turned his face towards the dungeon-door, and said, "My good friend Gerald—is, humph! the impostor forgotten?"

"Forgotten, as though he had never been," was the response, in the rough tones of the Norman Baron.

Then both laughed.

Pabo clenched his hands and teeth.

Presently, a clatter; and through the gateway passed the cavalcade. There was no drawbridge at Careg Cennen, for there was no moat, no water; but there was a portcullis, as well as stout oak-barred doors.



After the departure of the prelate, the castle fell back again into listlessness. No sounds reached the ear of Pabo, save the occasional footfall of one passing across the court with the leisurely pace of a person to whom time was of no value.

On this day the prisoner began to be distressed for water. The walls of his cell, being of pervious limestone, absorbed all moisture from the air, so that none condensed on it. In the morning he had swallowed the dry crusts with difficulty. He now felt that his lips were burning, and his tongue becoming dry. If food were brought him on the morrow, he doubted whether he would then be able to swallow it.

But relief came to him in a manner he had not expected. During the night rain fell, and he found that by crouching on the steps and putting his fingers beneath the door, he could catch the raindrops as they trickled down the oak plank, and convey the scanty supply by this means to his mouth. But with the first glimpse of dawn he saw a means of furnishing water that was more satisfactory. With his fingers he scraped a channel beneath the

door to receive the falling drops, and then, by heaping the soil beyond this, forced the water as it ran down the door and dripped, to decant itself in a small stream over the sill. By this means he was able to catch sufficient to assuage the great agony of thirst.

He was thus engaged when suddenly a foot destroyed his contrivance, and next moment he heard a key turned in the lock.

He started from the steps on which he was lying, the door was thrown open, and before him stood a muffled female figure, against the grey early morning light, diffused through thick rain that filled the castle yard.

Without a word the woman signed to Pabo to follow. She made the gesture with impatience, and he obeyed without hesitation.

"Follow me!" she whispered in Welsh, and strode rapidly before him, and passed through a small doorway, a very few steps from the tower, yet in the south face of the castle. She beckoned imperiously to him to enter, then closed the door on him, went back and relocked that of the dungeon.

Next moment she was back through the small door. Pabo found himself in a narrow passage that, as far as he could judge, descended by steps.

The woman bolted the door behind.

The place was dark, but she led on.

The way descended by steps, then led along a narrow passage, with rock on one side and wall on the other, till she reached a great natural vault—a cave opening into the heart of the crag on which the castle was built. And here the passage terminated in a wooden stair that descended into darkness, only illumined by one point of red light.

Still she descended, and Pabo followed.

Presently she was at the bottom, and now he saw in a hollow of the rock on one side a little lamp burning with a lurid flame.

She struck off the glowing snuff, and it sent up a bright spire of light.

“Forgotten!” said she, turning to Pabo, and throwing back her hood. “Forgotten! Nay, Nest will never forget one of her own people—never.”

CHAPTER XX

THE BRACELET OF MAXEN

“**L**OOK at me,” said Nest; “I am the daughter of Rhys and sister of your Prince Griffith. How I have been treated God knows, but not worse than my dear country. I have been cast into the arms of one of its oppressors, and I welcome it, because I can do something thereby for those of my people who suffer. Griffith is about. He will do great things. I sent him with warning to you. And now I will even yet save you. Know you where you are? Whither I have brought you? Come further.” She led him down among the smooth shoulders of rock, and showed him pans scooped in the limestone ledges that brimmed with water.

There was no well in Careg Cennen. It would not have availed to have sunk one. In the dry limestone there were no

springs. Gerald the Norman would not have reared his castle on this barren head of rock had he not known that water was accessible in this natural cave.

But this cavern had been known and utilised long before the Norman adventurers burst into Wales. At some remote age, we know not how many centuries or tens of centuries before, some warfaring people had surrounded the top of the hill with a wall of stones, not set in mortar, but sustained in place by their own weight. And to supply themselves with water, they had cut a path like a thread in the face of the precipice to the mouth of a gaping cavern that could be seen only from the slopes of the Black Mountains on the further side of the Cennen River.

In this vault water incessantly dripped, not in rapid showers, but slowly ; in wet weather more rapidly than at times of dryness, yet even in the most burning, rainless seasons, there never was an absolute cessation of falling drops. To receive these, bowls had been scooped out in ledges of rock ; and hither came the maidens daily with their pitchers, to supply the wants of all in the castle.

A

What the Norman builders had done was to broaden the path by cutting deeper into the face of the cliff, and to build up the face towards the precipice, leaving loopholes at intervals, to prevent accidents such as might happen through vertigo, or a turn of an ankle, or a slip on the polished lime-rock. The whole mouth of the cavern had also been walled up, so that no one unacquainted with the arrangements within the castle would have suspected its existence.

To fill the pitchers the water-carriers were furnished with wooden spoons and shallow ladles, with which they scooped up the liquid from the rock-basins into their vessels.

Hither Nest, the wife of Gerald of Windsor, had brought Pabo. She had learned what was the doom of the Arch-priest so soon as the interview was over between him, the bishop, and her husband. Nest was a subtle woman. Lovely beyond any other woman in Britain, and with that exquisite winsomeness of manner which only a Celtic woman possesses, which a Saxon can imitate but not acquire, she was able when she exerted her powers to cajole



Gerald, and obtain from him much that his judgment warned him he should not yield. For a long time she had induced him even to harbour her brother Griffith, but he did so only so long as the young man was not in open revolt against King Henry.

She had not on this occasion attempted to induce Gerald to mitigate the sentence on Pabo. She reserved her cajolery for another occasion. Now she had recourse to other means. With a little cleverness, she had succeeded in securing the key of the dungeon ; but for her own good reasons she did not desire that her husband should learn, or even suspect, that she had contrived the escape of the prisoner.

Pabo stood by her in the great natural domed vault in the bowels of the mountain, crowned by Careg Cennen Castle ; and by the flicker of the lamp he saw her face, and wondered at its beauty.

"Pabo, priest of God!" she said, and her face worked with emotion. "Heaven alone knows what a life I lead—a double life, a life behind a mask. I have a poor, weak, trembling woman's heart, that bleeds and suffers for my people. I have but

one love—one only love, that fills and flames in all my veins: it is the love of Wales, of my country, my beautiful, my sovereign country. And, O God! my people. Touch them, and I quiver and am tortured, and durst not cry out. Yet am I linked to one who is my husband, and I belong to him in body. Yet hath he not my immortal soul, he hath not this passionate heart. Nay! Not one single drop of the burning Welsh blood that dances and boils in every artery." She clasped her hands to her heart. "Oh, Pabo, my lot is in sad quarters! My life is one continuous martyrdom for my country, for my people, for their laws, their freedom, their Church! What can I do? Look at these women's fingers! What gifts have I? Only this fair face and this golden hair, and a little mother wit. I give all to the good cause. And now," she became more calm in tone, and she put forth her hand and clasped the priest by the wrist, and spake in measured tones, though her finger-ends worked nervously. "And now—learn this. For reasons that I cannot speak plainly, I would not have my husband know that I

have contrived thy escape. And I cannot contrive to pass thee out through the gates. There is but one way that thou canst be freed. See—the women come hither to draw water, and the door creaks on its hinges whensoever opened. When thou hearest the door cry out, then hide thee under the stair, or yonder in the depth of the cave. None of the wenches penetrate further than these basins. But after they have left—and they come but in the morning and at eve—then thou hast this place to thyself. Know that there is no escape downwards from the eyelet-holes. It is a sheer fall—and if that were adventured, thou wouldst be dashed to pieces, as was one of the Normandy masons who was engaged on the wall. He lost his foothold and fell—and was but a mangled heap at the bottom. No—that way there is no escape. I have considered well, and this is what I have devised.” She paused and drew a long breath. “There stands a stout and well-rooted thorn-tree on the crag above. I will tarry till supper-time, when my lord and his men will be merry over their cups, and then will I swing a bracelet—this.” She took off a twisted

serpent of gold, quaintly wrought, from her wrist. "This I will attach to a string, and I will fasten the other end to the thorn-tree. Then shall the bracelet be swung to and fro, and do thou remain at one of the loopholes, and put forth thine hand and catch the string as it swings. Hold it fast and do thou draw it in. Then I will attach a knotted rope to the string, and draw on until thou hast hold of the rope. Thereupon I will make the other end fast to the thorn-tree, and, as thou canst not descend, mount, and thou art free."

Pabo hesitated—then said, "It seems to me that these eyelet-holes are too narrow for a man's body to pass through."

"It is well said," answered Nest, "and of that I have thought. Here is a stout dagger. Whilst thou canst, work out the mortar from between the joints of the masonry about the window-slit yonder. It is very fresh and not set hard. But remove not the stone till need be."

"I will do so."

"And as to the bracelet," continued Nest, "it is precious to me, and must not be left here to betray what I have done. Take it away with thee."



"And when I reach the thorn-tree then I will restore it thee."

"Nay," rejoined Nest, "take it with thee, and go find my brother Griffith, wherever he be, and give it to him. Know this: it was taken from the cairn of Maxen Wledig, the Emperor of Britain, whose wife was a Welsh princess, and whose sons ruled in Britain, and of whose blood are we. Tell him to return me my bracelet within the walls of Dynevor. Tell him"—her breath came fast and like flame from her lips—"tell him that I will not wear it till he restore it to me in the castle of our father—in the royal halls of our ancestors, the Kings of Dyfed, and has fed the ravens of Dynevor with English flesh."

Again she calmed down.

A strange, passionate woman. At one moment flaming into consuming heat, then lulling down to calm and coolness. It was due to the double life she lived; the false face she was constrained to assume, and the undying, inextinguishable patriotic ardour that ate out her heart, that was so closely and for so long smothered, but which must at times force itself into mani-

festation. Pabo, looking into that wondrous face, by the flicker of the little lamp, saw in it a whole story of sorrow, shame, rage, love, and tenderness mapped out.

A strange and terrible life-story had hers been—even in young days.

She had been taken from her home while quite a child, and committed as a hostage to the charge of Henry Beauclerk ; he had done her the worst outrage that could have been offered—when she was helpless, an alien from her home and people, in his power. Then, without caring whether she liked the man or not, he had married her to Gerald of Windsor the spoiler, the ravager of South Wales. Once, Owen ap Cadogan, son of the Prince of Cadogan, had seen her at a banquet and eisteddfod given by her father at Aberteifi, to which the kings, princes, and lords of Wales had been invited. Among all the fair ladies there assembled none approached in beauty the young Princess Nest, daughter of King Rhys, and wife of Gerald of Windsor. Owen went mad with love. On the plea of kinship he visited her in Pembroke Castle, set it on



fire, and while it was blazing carried her away into Powys.

Nor was she an unwilling victim: she accompanied him, but only because she trusted that he would rouse all Wales and unite North and South in one great revolt against the power of England. And, indeed, at his summons, like a wildfire, revolt had spread through Dyfed, Cardigan, and southern Powys. Only North Wales remained unmoved. The struggle was brief—the Cymri were poor and deficient in weapons of war, and were unable to withstand the compact masses hurled against them, in perfect military discipline, and securing every stride by the erection of a stronghold. Owen, carrying with him plenty of spoil, fled to Ireland, where he was hospitably received, and Gerald recovered his wife. She was disillusioned. Owen sought no nobler end than the amassing of plunder and the execution of vindictive revenge on such as had offended him. His ferocity had alienated from him the hearts of his people, for his sword had been turned rather against such of his own kin as had incurred his resentment than against the common foe.

Into Cardigan, the realm of Owen's father, Strongbow had penetrated, and had planted castles.

Presently, harbouring treachery in his heart, Owen returned from Ireland and threw himself into the arms of Henry Beauclerk, who flattered him with promises and took him in his company to Normandy, where he bestowed on Owen the honour of knighthood, and converted him into a creature ready to do his pleasure, without scruple.

Pembroke Castle had been rebuilt, Carmarthen was girt with iron-bound towers; in rear, Strongbow was piling up fortresses at Aberystwyth and Killgerein.

"See!" said Nest; "poorly hast thou fared hitherto. I have laid in a store of food for thee under the stair. Be ready just before nightfall. Lay hold of the golden bracelet, and retain it till thou encounterest Griffith, then give it him with my message. Let him return it me in our father's ruined hall of Dynevor, when it is his own once more."

CHAPTER XXI

SANCTUARY

ROGIER was pacing up and down in the house of which he had taken possession. On the table lay, heaped in bags of woven grass, the fine that had been imposed on the tribe. All had been paid. The elders had endeavoured hard to induce him to accept two-thirds from them and to levy the remainder on Cadell; but he bade them squeeze their Arch-priest—he was not going to trouble himself to do that—and the rest of the silver was produced. The men hoped to be able to recoup themselves later by deducting this third from their payments to the pastor thrust upon them.

As Pabo had been secured, Rogier had released those who were detained in the court-house; they had returned to their homes.

It was anticipated that now the Norman would withdraw along with his men; he had no further excuse for remaining. But he gave not the smallest token of an intention to remove.

Cadell had entered. He also wished to know how long the foreigners would tarry in the place. So long as they were there it would be impossible for him to come to friendly terms with his flock. Yet, though he desired that the bulk of the men-at-arms, along with their captain, should withdraw, he did not by any means wish to be left completely alone in the midst of a population that regarded him with a malevolent eye, were unwilling to receive his ministrations, acknowledge his authority, and even show him ordinary civility.

He had accordingly entered the house in the hopes of arranging with the bishop's brother terms whereby he might have two or four men left in Caio to support him in emergencies without being ostensibly his servants.

A plea might easily be found in the refractory humour of the people for a small guard to be left till they proved more complaisant.

Near the door, against the wall, Morwen was seated, pale but resolved, with her hands folded.

"You seem to be in a vast impatience to see my back," said Rogier, "but let me tell you, Master Chaplain, I like this place. It lyeth well to the sun, the soil is fertile and amply watered. It is suitably timbered, and methinks there is building-stone here that might serve to construct a stronghold. I have looked about me and fancied Pen-y-ddinas. It crieth out for a castle to stand upon it—dominating, as it doth, the whole valley."

"A castle for the bishop?"

"Oh! save your presence and clergy. It is well for one to feather one's own nest first. As to the Church, hers is downy enough without needing to pluck more geese to make her easier."

"Then for whom?"

"For myself, of course. This is a fair district; it is girded about with mountains; it has been occupied for centuries by a thrifty people who have hoarded their silver. Methinks I could contrive to make of it a barony of Caio for myself."

"But," said Cadell, aghast, "these be

Church lands. You would not rob the Church?"

"By no means are they Church lands. This is tribal land, and it so chances that the head of the tribe has been for some time—how long I know not—an ecclesiastic. But that is an accident."

"It is the sanctuary of David."

"But not the property of the See of David. It is the sanctuary of Cynwyl, I take it; and it has so fallen out that the inheritor of the chieftainship has been for some years—it may be centuries—in priestly orders. But as to belonging to the See, that it never did. Now I take it, there shall be a separation of powers, and I will assume the secular rule, and constitute myself Baron of Caio—and thou, if it please thee, shalt be Archpriest, and exercise ecclesiastical authority. It will be best so—then I and my bull-dogs will be ever hard by to help thee in thy difficulties."

"The bishop will never agree to this."

"He must. Am I going to fight his battles and not be paid for it, and fix my price?"

"Does he know of thy purpose?"

“I care not whether he do or not. I shall take my course, and he cannot oppose me, because he dare not. By the soul of the Conqueror, Sir Chaplain, these fat farmers ooze with money. I have but given them a little squeeze, and they have run out silver—it is yonder, dost mark it? Hast thou seen cider made? They make it in my country. The apples are chopped up and cast into a broad stone grooved trough, and a lever is brought to bear, laden with immense weights, to crush them. You should see, man, how the juice runs out, and you would say that there was never another drop of liquor in them. Then the lever is raised, and the weight shifted; next with a knife the apple-cheese is pared all round and the parings are cast up in the middle. Again the lever is worked, and out flows as much as at first, till again it appears that all is drained away. And this process is renewed to five times, and every time out pours the generous and sweet must. It is not with apples as with grapes. These latter once well pressed yield all—apples must be pressed to six and even seven times. My Cadell, these peasants are

juicy apples. If I send this first squeeze to my brother, I reserve the after out-gushes for mine own drinking."

Cadell looked down disconcerted. He knew very well that Rogier's scheme would mean the shrinkage to but little of his power and profits.

"You do not understand this people," said he, after some consideration. "You will drive them to desperation with your rough treatment. They are a kindly and a gentle folk that are easily led, but ill driven."

"Well now," said Rogier, and laughed. He halted, leaned against the table, and folded his arms. "It is so ; but I have a scheme such as will reconcile the tribe of Cynwyl to my rule. And thou art come here suitably at this moment, to assist me in carrying it out."

"What wouldest thou?" asked Cadell sulkily.

"It is even this," answered Rogier, and again he laughed. "Dost see? I have been courting a pretty wench. But it is bad wooing when I cannot speak a word of Welsh and she as little of French. Now, Sir Priest, be my go-between, and

say sweet and tender words to her from me, and bring me back her replies of the same savor."

"I cannot! I will not!" exclaimed the chaplain indignantly.

"I ask of thee nothing dishonest," said Rogier; "far otherwise. I have a fancy to make the pretty Morwen my wife—and Baroness Caio. Tell her that—all is in good sooth and my purpose is honourable, the Church shall be called to bless us."

"She is another man's wife!"

"Nay, nay, a priest's leman—that is all. And if that stick in thy throat, be conscience-smoothed. By this time Pabo is no more. I know my brother's temper. He is a man who never forgives; and the loss of a pair of teeth is not that he will pass over."

"But he does not hold that this man you have sent him is Pabo."

"Pshaw! he knows better. Whether he be Pabo, or whether he be not, Bernard will never suffer him to live a week after he has him between his two palms. Therefore, seeing Morwen is a widow, and free, now, all is plain, my intent is good. If I marry her—who has been the wife of the

chieftain of the tribe, I enter upon all his rights so far as they are secular ; those that be ecclesiastical I leave to thee."

"Not so," said Cadell sharply. "She is no heiress, is not of the blood."

"Oh! she shall be so esteemed. Scripture is with me—man and wife be no more twain but one flesh, so that she enters into all his rights, and I take them over along with her. It will smooth the transfer. The people will like it, or will gulp down what is forced on them, and pretend to be content."

"This is preposterous—the heir to the tribal rights is Goronwy, the cousin of Pabo."

"That cripple? The people would not have him before to rule over them. They will not now. Let them look on him and then on me ; there can be but one decision. If there be a doubt, I shall contrive to get the weasel out of the way. And, moreover," said Rogier, who chuckled over his scheme, "all here are akin—that is why there was such a to-do about the seven degrees. It hit them all. I warrant ye, when gone into, it will be found that she

has in her the blood of—— What is the name?"

"Cunedda."

"Ay, of that outlandish old forefather. If not, I can make it so. There is a man here—Meredith they call him—a bard and genealogist. I have a pair of thumb-screws, and I can spoil his harping for ever unless he discover that the pretty wench whom I design for myself, to be my Baroness Caio, be lineally descended from—I cannot mind the name—and be, after Goronwy, the legitimate heir to all the tribal rights. Cadell, you can make a man say and swear to anything with the persuasion of thumb-screws. A rare institution."

The chaplain said nothing to this. It was a proposition that did not admit of dispute.

A good many of the Norman barons had taken the Welsh heiresses to them as a means of disarming the opposition they encountered, perhaps feeling a twinge of compunction at their methods of appropriation of lands by the sword. Gerald of Windsor, as we have seen, was married to a princess of the royal race of Dyfed,

though not, indeed, an heiress. A knight occupying a subordinate position, if he chanced to secure as wife the heiress of some Welsh chief, at once claimed all her lands and rights, and sprang immediately into the position of a great baron.

"Come, sweetheart!" exclaimed Rogier boisterously, and went up to Morwen and caught her by the chin. "Look me in the face and say 'Ay!' and I will put a coronet of pearls on thy black hair."

She shrank from him—not, indeed, understanding his words, but comprehending that she was treated with disrespect.

"Speak to her, you fool!" said Rogier angrily. "She must be told what I purpose. If not by you then by Pont l'Espeç, whom I will call in. But by the Conqueror's paunch, I do not care to do my wooing through the mouth of a common serving-man."

Cadell stood up from the seat into which he had lowered himself and approached Morwen.

"Hark ye!" said the Norman. "No advice of thine own; I can see thou likest not my design. Say my words, give my

message, and bear me back her reply—but thrust in naught of thy mind, and thy suasion.”

“What, then, shall I say?”

“Tell her that I am not one to act with violence unless thwarted, and in this particular thwarted I will not be. Tell her that I desire that she shall be my wife; and say that I will make myself baron over this district of Caio—King Henry will deny me nothing I wot—and she shall rule and reign the rest of her days by a soldier’s side, instead of by that of a cassocked clerk.”

Cadell translated the offer.

Morwen’s large eyes were fixed on him intently as he spoke, and her lips trembled.

“I must give an answer,” said the priest.

Then Morwen rose and replied, “He will surely give me time to consider.”

“Ay, ay, till to-morrow,” said Rogier, when her words were translated to him.

Thereupon Morwen bowed and left the house.

Rogier took a step towards the door, but Cadell stayed him. “Give her till to-morrow to be alone.”

"Well," said he, "to-morrow shall settle it."

Cadell left, and instead of seeking his lodging went into the church.

There, to his surprise, he saw a woman—it was Morwen, clinging to the wicker-work screen.

"It is sanctuary! It is sanctuary!" she cried, as she saw him. "They shall not tear me hence."

"Nay," said Cadell; "that they dare not. I will maintain thy right to sanctuary. It is well. To Cynwyl thou hast appealed, Cynwyl shall protect thee."

CHAPTER XXII

IN OGOF AU

IN the darkness, Goronwy was lurking about the church. He was the first to communicate to Rogier that Morwen had taken sanctuary. The Norman, angry, bade him watch and not suffer her to leave without informing him whither she had betaken herself. She could not remain there indefinitely. It was a custom that sanctuary held for seven days and nights, and that if the clergy could not send away a refugee during that time, the right of protection afforded by the sacredness of the precincts ceased in that particular case.

Rogier was wounded in his vanity, but not greatly concerned. He was certain that she could not escape him eventually.

A hand was laid on Goronwy's shoulder; he started with terror, and his alarm was

not lessened when Pabo addressed him, "What are you doing here, Goronwy?"

"Oh, Pabo! we have feared you were lost."

"As you see—I am returned. What are you doing here?"

"Alas! I have no proper home—no more than you. Do you ask then why I am about at night?"

"Poor boy! poor boy! Well, I would have you do me a commission now. I must not be seen here, yet would communicate with my wife. Where is Morwen?"

Goronwy hesitated but for a moment, and then answered, "I do not know."

"She is not now with Howel?"

"No, sent elsewhere. Perhaps to Llan-sawel."

"You must find her, and bid her come to me."

"Whither shall I bid her go?"

"Bid her come to me in Ogofau."

"In Ogofau?" echoed Goronwy, shrinking back.

"There is one thing more I desire," pursued Pabo. "Go into the church and bring me thence one of those coils of taper that hang in front of the screen."

"Taper!" in all but speechless astonishment.

"Yes; I am going to enter the old mine. I do not hesitate to tell you, as one in blood, in hopes, in sufferings with me. I am going to enter the mine, and would fain have a consecrated light."

"I will get it at once," said Goronwy, and went within. What could this mean? What was Pabo's object? Within the church two lamps burnt in the sanctuary, but without all was dark. Yet in the darkness he could see Morwen crouched against the screen. A Celtic church had buildings connected with it—a guest hall in which the congregation could assemble and take a meal after divine service, stables for horses, and even sleeping apartments. All were surrounded by the privilege of sanctuary; yet Morwen remained in the church, fearing lest these adjuncts should not meet with the same respect as the main building, the house of God.

Against the screen were hung a number of twisted wax tapers, forming coils. These were employed on vigils and at the Christmas Eve service at night. One of these

Goronwy took down. He said no word to Morwen, but went out as silently as he had entered.

"I thank you," said Pabo. "I would not myself enter lest Cadell should be there, and he recognise me."

"You need not have feared that," laughed Goronwy. "He is not one to spend hours in prayer. He is not there."

"Then will I enter and pray."

"Nay," Goronwy interposed. "There are others there who it were well should not see you."

"Be it so," said Pabo. "And now—find Morwen, ay—and speak with Howel also. Tell him naught of Ogofau. I shall have something to say shortly that will make the hearts of all Welshmen dance."

"And will you not tell me?"

"All in good time, lad. As yet I cannot say, for in sooth it is an expectation and not a certainty."

Then he departed. Goronwy leaned against the church wall, looking in the direction he had taken, perplexed and not knowing what he should do.

Pabo took his course over the brawling

Annell, below the church, and mounted a spur of hill, among woods, till he came to a hollow, an incipient glen that ran west, and opposite rose a rounded height crowned by a camp, the *Caer* of ancient Cynyr, the father of the Five Saints. It was thence these holy brothers had descended to place themselves under the tuition of Cynwyl. It was when these five had disappeared into the gold-mine that the father had surrendered his principality to the missionary who had come among them from the North, and thus had constituted the Archpriesthood, holding a chieftaindom over the *Caio* district.

And now Pabo descended among stumps of trees and broken masses of stone, and all at once stood on the edge of a great crater, into which the silvery light of the moon from behind a haze flowed, and which it filled. Out of this circular basin shot up a spire of rock, called the Belfry of *Gwen*—of her who had dared to enter the mine to spy on the Saints in their magic sleep.

Cautiously Pabo descended the steep side, where the rubble, sifted for gold, sloped to the floor.

On reaching the bottom he looked around him.

He was in an amphitheatre of rock, here abrupt, there buried under slopes of detritus.

The moon came out and sent the shadow of Gwen's Belfry across the level white floor of the mine.

What the Romans had done was to scoop out the interior of a nodule of hill, much as we now dig out the inside of a Stilton cheese, and leave the walls intact. But there existed this difference: that the walls were not like a cheese-rind, that could be pierced through. They were but portions of the mountain, into which, by adits from the crater, the miners had burrowed. Most of these old tunnels were choked, some hidden under slides of rubble, but one gaped black, and it was into this that the Five Saints had entered according to legend, and Gwen also. And now Pabo was about to penetrate as well. Doubt of the reality of the discovery made by the hermit had departed. Pabo was fully convinced that he would light on the hoard. His sole fear was lest he should forget the directions he had seen traced on the plank.

There was little wind now, below in this bowl. He struck flint and steel together and obtained a light. Then he kindled his wax taper, signed himself with the cross, and entered the cave.

For some way in, the floor was covered with stones that had been thrown in. The roof was higher than his head, and was arched.

This was no natural cavern like that under Careg Cennen. This was cut by man's hand, out of rock very different in character, colour, and texture from the limestone.

The light from his taper glittered in the water that trickled over the sides, and in the pools that here and there lay in the footway. There were no stalagmites. Pabo could distinguish the marks of the picks used to excavate the adit. All at once he was startled by a rushing and whistling.

He drew back, and past him swept legions of bats that had hitherto lived undisturbed in this cave. They came back, flickered near his face, threatened his light, and he shouted and threw stones. Then—he saw, heard them no

more. They had issued from the portal and had gone to hunt under the open sky.

Now the ground rose ; there had been an accumulation of soil, and he was forced to bend low to pass on. But presently the floor sank and the vault was loftier, and he pursued his course erect.

The ground now was hard rock, not earth, and it rang under his steps. It was also dry. The air was intensely still.

The candle cast but a feeble light, and that but imperfectly illumined the way before him. He could best see by holding it above his head, yet was able to do this only where the arched roof was high, and he ever feared lest it should strike on a rock and become extinguished.

The passage bulged and became a hall, and here it seemed to him that he saw some blue object before him. He stood, uncertain what it was, and whether to venture towards it. Presently he discovered that it was a patch of light, a reflection of some of the moonlit vapour in the sky falling through a small orifice far, far above in a dome, the height of which he could not measure. In contrast with the yellow flame of his candle, this

feeble spot had looked blue as a turquoise. He tried to recollect the plan sketched on the board, and he did remember that this hall was there indicated, with *Ibi lumen* scrawled beside it. He traversed this hall and entered another passage, or a continuance of the same, beyond. Then he put his hand to his brow, and endeavoured to recall the sketch of the mine—and felt that it was gone from him.

While lying in prison at Careg Cennen he had recalled it distinctly—he now, indeed, remembered that there was a direction *in sinistram* or *ad dextram*, he could not now say which, and where the turn was to be made. However, there surely could be no mistake—as he had the way open before him.

Hitherto he had felt no fear. Possibly his incarceration in partial darkness had accustomed him to some such places; he pushed on, moreover, animated with hope. And he placed some confidence in his blessed taper from the church of the patron of his family and tribe.

But suddenly he sprang back, and only just in time. In front of him, occupying the whole width of the passage, was a

hole. How deep it was he had some means of judging by hearing the bound and rebound of a stone dislodged by his foot.

"*Cave puteum*;" now he recalled the warning.

He crept forward cautiously, and extended his light over the gulf. It illumined the sides but a little way down. Judging by the time a stone took in falling before it plashed into water, it must have been about fifty feet in depth.

The well was not large at the mouth. And now Pabo distinctly remembered that the *Thesaurus* was not far beyond it.

It did not occur to him to return. He was so near the goal that reach it he must.

He examined attentively the sides. Not a thread of a track existed whereby the abyss might be skirted. There were no pieces of wood about by means of which it could be bridged.

The well's mouth was but four feet in diameter. Surely he could leap that!

He stepped back two, three strides, and bounded. He reached the ground beyond, but in the spring his light was extinguished.

The snuff was glowing, and he blew on it, but it would not flame.

"It matters not," said he. "I have my tinder and steel; I can relight it. Now on, on to the gold!"

He stepped forward in the dark, but holding the taper with the smouldering snuff. Then his steps sounded as though he were in a wide chamber. He held out his hands: the walls had fallen away. A few steps further, and he stumbled, and, stumbling, dropped on his knees, and saw by the expiring light of the snuff—the glint of ingots of gold.

The last spark went out, and he was in complete darkness.

CHAPTER XXIII

AURI MOLES PRÆGRANDIS

PABO rose to his feet at once. He had seen, he had touched the gold. The wax taper had dropped from his hand as he fell. He groped for it and soon found it. Then he put his hand to his pouch for flint and steel. They were not there. He searched the breast of his tunic. They were not there either. Then he passed his hand over the floor, thinking that he might have dropped them from his pouch when he fell. As yet he was not alarmed, rather concerned, as he was impatient to see the treasure. Kneeling, he groped on all sides of him, but could not find what he sought. His hand touched ingots; that he knew by their shape, and that they were of gold he was assured by the yellow glint when his wax light fell.

Still bending on one knee, and with a hand on the ground, he began to consider what could have become of flint and steel. Was it possible that he had left them outside the "Ogof" when he lighted the taper? He racked his brain. He distinctly recalled the kindling of the wick. He could not remember having replaced the flint, steel, and tinder in his pouch. It might have occurred that flint or steel had fallen out when he stumbled, or even when he leaped the chasm, but not that tinder as well should have gone. He knew that whilst engaged in kindling the taper he had placed the now missing articles on a stone just within the entrance. There they might be still. He must have forgotten to replace them in his purse. Forgotten those things most necessary to him in the mine! Only conceivable through the occupation of his thoughts over the treasure in quest of which he was venturing. He had found the treasure, but now was without the means of reckoning what was the amount, even of seeing it.

Again he groped about the floor, in desperation, hoping against conviction that the flint, steel, and tinder might be

lying there. His hands passed over the cold, damp rock; it was in vain; and weariness at length compelled him to desist. Now only did the whole horror of his situation weigh on him. The chasm lay between him and his way back. He might, possibly enough, by feeling find the passage by which he had entered; but how could he traverse that awful abyss? He was buried alive.

He sat in the darkness listening.

He heard no sound whatever, save at long intervals a drip of water.

He stared into the blackness of night that surrounded him, but could see not the faintest trace of light. And yet—not at any great distance was the hall into which a pearly ray fell from an orifice above; but between him and that spot of light lay the well.

Were it not better to essay to return, and risk the headlong fall into that gulf, than to sit there in darkness, in solitude, till death by starvation came on him, and hear the slow ticking of the falling drops?

What chance of rescue had he?

True that he had sent word to his wife to meet him at the Ogofau—the caves, in

the plural, not to seek for him in the one Ogof, in the singular, that was specially dreaded as the haunt of Gwen, and the place where slept the Five Saints.

Would his wife think of seeking him therein? Could she possibly venture so far from the light? It was not credible.

He tried to rise, but his limbs were stiff, and he shivered as with cold.

Cautiously, with extended hands, he groped for the wall, and finally reached it. Then, passing them along, he felt his way towards the opening to the passage. But as to his direction, of that he knew nothing, could form no conjecture. While searching for his kindling tools, he had turned himself about and lost every inkling as to the course by which he had entered.

After a while his right hand no longer encountered rock, and stepping sideways, he held with his left hand to the wall and stretched forth the right, but felt nothing. Letting go, but with reluctance, he moved another step sideways and now touched rock again.

He had found the passage, and he took a few steps down it, drawing his hand

along the side. He put forth the right foot, feeling the floor lest he should come unawares on the chasm. So he crept on, but whether he were going forward in a straight line or was describing a curve, he did not know. His brain was in a whirl. Then he struck his head against a prong of rock that descended from above, and reeled back and fell.

For a while, without being completely stunned, he lay in half-consciousness. His desperate condition filled him with horror.

What if he did find his way to the ledge of the well? Could he leap it? If he made the attempt, he did not know in which direction to spring; he might bound, dash himself against the rock, and go reeling down into the gulf. But even to make such a leap he must take a few strides to acquire sufficient impetus. How measure his strides in the pitch darkness? How be sure that he did not leap too precipitately and not land at all, but go down whirling into the depths? And there was something inexpressibly hideous in the thought of lying dead below, sopping in water at the bottom of that abyss—sopping till his flesh parted from

the bones, away from the light, his fate unknown to his wife, his carcase there to lie till Doomsday.

Partly due to the blow he had received, partly to desperation, his mind became confused. Strange thoughts came over him. He seemed to acquire vision, and to behold the Five Saints lying in a niche before him, with their heads on a long stone. They were very old, and their faces covered with mildew. Their silver beards had grown and covered them like blankets. One had his hand laid on the ground, and the fingers were like stag's-horn lichen.

Then the one saint raised this white hand, passed it over his face, opened his eyes, and sat up.

"Brothers," said he, in a faint, small voice, "let us turn our pillow."

Thereat the other four sat up, and the one who had roused his brethren said, "See—we have worn holes in the stone with our heads. We will turn our pillow."

And in verity there were five cup-like depressions in the stone. Then the old Saint reversed the stone, and at once all four laid their heads on it again and went

again to sleep. The fifth also relaid his head on the stone, and immediately his eyes closed.

Then it was to Pabo as though he saw a white face peeping round a corner of a rock; and this was followed by a form—thin, vaporous, clad in flowing white robes.

"Gwen! Gwen!" he cried, starting up. "You—you know a way forth! You leave in thunder and storm. Let me hold to your skirts, and draw me from this pit of darkness!"

But with his cries the phantasm had vanished. His eyes were staring into pitch darkness, in which not even a spectral form moved.

And still—he heard at long-drawn intervals the drip, drip of water.

Again he sank back into half-consciousness, and once more his troubled brain conjured up fantastic visions.

He thought himself again in the cave at Careg Cennen, and that the beautiful Nest came to him. Somehow, he confused her with Gwen. She seemed also to be vaporous—all but her face and her radiant golden hair. What eyes she had, and how they flashed and glowed as she

spoke of the wrongs done to her country and to her people!

He thought she spoke to him, and said, "Oh, Pabo, Pabo, I have trusted in thee! My brother, he is raising all Cymraig peoples. Take to him the treasure of the old Romans. With that he will buy harness, and swords, and spears, and will call over and enroll levies from Ireland. With gold he will bribe, and get admission to castles he cannot break up. With gold he will get fleets to sail up the Severn Sea and harass the enemy as they venture along the levels of Morganwg. See, see, I have given thee the bracelet of Maxen the Emperor! It is a solemn trust. Bear it to him; let it not be lost here in the bowels of the earth!"

And again he started with a cry and said, "Help, help, Princess Nest! Me thou didst draw out of the dungeon. Me thou didst bring up out of the cave. Deliver me now!"

And again all was blackness, and there was no answer. Still continued the monotonous drip. Then Pabo bit his tongue, and resolved by no means to suffer himself to fall away into these trances again.

With strong resolution he fought with phantom figures as they rose before his eyes, with drowsiness as it crept over his brain, with whispers and mutterings that sounded in his ears.

How long the time was that passed he knew not. He might have counted the drips of water, yet knew not the length of each interval between the falling of the drops.

He forcibly turned his mind to Morwen, and wondered what would become of her. Howel he trusted to do his uttermost, but Howel would have been hung but for his opportune return.

Then his mind turned to the prospects of down-trampled Wales ; to the chances of Griffith—to the defection and treachery of the King of North Wales ; to the discouragement that had followed the abortive attempt of Owen ap Cadogan. But Owen had been a man false of heart, seeking only his selfish ends : without one spark of loyalty to his nation. Far other was Griffith. His beauty, his open manner, his winning address, were matched with a character true, brave, and sympathetic. In him the people had a leader in whom



they could trust. And yet what would be his chances against the overwhelming power of England and Normandy?

Before Pabo's eyes, as they closed unconsciously, clouds seemed to descend, overspread and darken his beautiful land. He saw again and again devastation sweep it. He saw alien nobles and alien prelates fasten on it and suck its resources like leeches. There passed before him, as it were, wave on wave of darkness, fire, and blood. And then—suddenly a spark, a flame, a blaze, and in it a Welsh prince mounting the English throne, one of the blood of Cunedda—the ancestor of the Saint of Caio, their loved Cynwyl. The lions! the black lions of Cambria waving over the throne of England!

Pabo started with a thrill of triumph, but it was to hear a shriek, piercing, harsh, horrible, ring through the vault, followed by crash, crash, again a dull thud—and a splash.

Thereon all was silent.

Dazed in mind, unaware whether he were dreaming still, or whether what he had heard were real, with every nerve quivering, with his blood fluttering in his

temples, at his heart, he shut his eyes, clutched the ground, and held his breath.

And then—next moment a flash—and a cry—"Pabo!"

He opened his eyes—but saw nothing, only light. But he felt arms about him, felt his head drawn to a soft and throbbing bosom, felt warm tears dropping on his face.

"Pabo! oh, my Pabo! it was not you!"

By degrees his faculties returned.

Then he saw before him Howel bearing a horn lantern; but he felt, he could not see, her who had folded him in her arms and was sobbing over him.

"We have found you," said Howel.

"But for her I would not have dared to enter. Yet she would have gone alone. She saw thy flint and steel on a stone at the entrance. She was full of fear, and left me no rest till I agreed to accompany her. Tell me, what was that fearful cry?"

"I know not. The place is full of phantoms."

"Was there none with thee?"

"None. Were ye alone?"

"We were alone."

"Then it was the cry of Gwen, or of

some evil spirit. And oh! Howel. *Auri moles prægrandis.*"

"I understand not."

"Come and see."

Pabo started to his feet now, disengaging himself gently from the arms of his wife but not relaxing the hold of her hand which he clasped.

A few steps were retraced to the hall, and there lay the fallen wax taper, and there, piled up, were ingots of gold.

"See!" exclaimed Pabo. "For Griffith ap Rhys. With this—at last something may be done."

Howel passed his lantern over it meditatively.

"Yes," he said, "it is just what has been the one thing that has failed us hitherto."

"Not the only thing; the other—a true man."

"Right. We have here the means of success, and in Griffith—the true leader."

"Come!" said Pabo. "I must to the light. I am weary of darkness."

He rekindled his wax taper at Howell's light, and all proceeded on their way; and before many minutes had elapsed were in

the domed chamber, traversed from above by a tiny ray of moonlight.

Pabo stood still. His head spun.

"But the well! the well!"

His wife and Howel looked at him with surprise.

"How came you to me? How did you pass the chasm?"

"There was no chasm. We have returned as we went."

Pabo clasped his head.

"There is a well. I leaped it. I feared to fall into it."

Then all at once, clear before him stood the plan as drawn by the hermit. From the chamber where light was there were two passages leading to the treasure—one had in it the well—that was the turn to the right, and the direction had been to go to the left. He who had seen the map had gone wrong. They who had never seen it went right. But, we may ask, what was that cry? From whom did it issue?

All that can be said is this: Goronwy, after having given the message, watched curiously, and saw Morwen go to the house of Howel. Had he not been in-

quisitive to know the meaning of the meeting in Ogofau, he would have betrayed her at once to Rogier. As it was, he resolved to follow and observe, unseen.

He had done so, and at a distance, after Howel and Morwen, he had entered the mine.

More cannot be said.

Goronwy was never seen again.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PLYGAIN OF DYFED

LIKE an explosion of fire-damp in a coal-mine — sudden, far-reaching, deadly—so was the convulsion in South Wales.

All was quiet to-day. On the morrow the whole land, from the Bay of Cardigan to Morganwg, was in flames. The rising had been prepared for with the utmost caution.

The last to anticipate it were the soldiery under Rogier, who were quartered in Caio. Notwithstanding imperative orders from the bishop at Llawhaden to return to him, they had remained where they were, and had continued to conduct themselves in the same lawless manner as before. They scoffed at the tameness with which their insolence was endured.

"They are Cynwyl conies — des lapins!" they said. "Say 'Whist!' and nothing more is seen of them than their white tails as they scuttle to their burrows."

For centuries this had been an oasis of peace, unlapped by the waves of war. The very faculty of resistance was taken out of these men, who could handle a plough or brandish a shepherd's crook, but were frightened at the chime of a bowstring and the flash of a pike.

Yet, secretly, arms were being brought into the valley, and were distributed from farm to farm and from cot to cot ; and the men whose wives and daughters had been dishonoured, whose savings had been carried off, who had themselves been beaten and insulted, whose relatives had been hung as felons, were gripping the swords and handling the lances—eager for the signal that should set them free to fall on their tormentors. And that signal came at last.

On Christmas Eve, from the top of Pen-y-ddinas shot up a tongue of flame. At once from every mountain-side answered flashes of fire. There was light

before every house, however small. The great basin of Caio was like a reversed dome of heaven studded with stars.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked Rogier, issuing from the habitation he had appropriated to himself, and looking round in amazement.

"It is the plygain," replied his man, Pont d'Arche, who knew something of Welsh.

"Plygain! What is that?"

"The coming in of Christmas. They salute it with lights and carols and prayers and dances."

"Methinks I can hear sounds."

"Ay! they are coming to church."

"With torches—there are many."

"They all come."

Then a man came rushing up the hill; he was breathless. On reaching where stood Rogier, he gasped: "They come—a thousand men, and all armed!"

"It is a river of fire."

Along the road could be seen a waving line of light, and from all sides, down the mountains ran cascades of light as well.

"There is not a man is not armed, and each woman bears a torch; their wives

come with them, to see revenge done on us."

Then up came Cadell. He was trembling.

"Rogier," he said, "this is no plygain for us—the entire country is stirring. The whole people is under arms, and swearing to have our blood."

"We will show these conies of Cynwyl that we are not afraid of them."

"They are no conies now, but lions. Can you stand against a thousand men? And—this is not all, I warrant. The whole of the Towy Valley, and that of the Teify, all Dyfed, maybe all Wales, is up to-night. Can you make your way through?"

Rogier uttered a curse.

"By the paunch of the Bastard! I relish not running before these conies."

"Then tarry—and they will hang you beside Cynwyl's bell, where you slung their kinsmen."

Rogier's face became mottled through mingled rage and fear.

Meanwhile, his men had rallied around him, running from the several houses they were lodging in; a panic had seized

them. Some, without awaiting orders, were saddling their horses.

"Hark!" shouted Rogier. "What is that?"

The river of light had become a river of song. The thunder of the voices of men and the clear tones of the women combined. And from every rill of light that descended from the heights to swell the advancing current, came the strain as well.

"They have come carolling," said Rogier disdainfully.

"Carol, call you this?" exclaimed Cadell. "It is the war-song of the sons of David. 'Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him, flee before him. Like as the smoke vanisheth, so shalt thou drive them away: and like as wax melteth at the fire, so let the ungodly perish——'"

"I will hear no more," said Rogier. "Mount! And Heaven grant us a day when we may revenge this."

"I will go too," said Cadell. "Here I dare not remain."

Before the advancing river of men arrived at the crossing of the Annell, the

entire band of the Normans had fled—not one was left.

Then up the ascent came the procession.

First went the staff of Cynwyl, not now in its gold and gem-encrusted shrine, but removed from it—a plain, rough, ashen stick, borne aloft by Morgan ap Seyssult, its hereditary guardian, and behind him came Meredith, with his two attendant bards, all with their harps, striking them as the multitude intoned the battle-song that for five hundred years had not sounded within the sanctuary of David. The women bore torches aloft, the men marched four abreast, all armed and with stern faces, and Pabo was there—and led them.

The Archpriest, on reaching the church, mounted a block of stone, and dismissed the women. Let them return to their homes. A panic had fallen on those who had molested them, and they had fled. The work was but begun, and the men alone could carry it on to the end.

Rogier and his men did not draw rein till they had reached the Ystrad Towy, the broad valley through which flowed the drainage of the Brecknock Mountains.

And there they saw that on all sides beacons were kindled; in every hamlet resounded the noise of arms. At Llandeilo they threw themselves into Dynevor, which had but a slender garrison. But there they would not stay; and, avoiding such places as were centres of gathering to the roused natives, they made for Carmarthen.

The castle there was deemed impregnable. It was held mainly by Welsh mercenaries in the service of Gerald of Windsor. Rogier mistrusted them; he would not remain there, for he heard that Griffith ap Rhys, at the head of large bodies of insurgents, was marching upon Carmarthen.

Next day the brother of the bishop was again on the move with his men by day-break, and passed into the Cleddau Valley, making for Llawhaden.

In the meantime the men of Caio were on the march. None were left behind save the very old and the very young and the women.

They marched four abreast, with the staff of Cynwyl borne before them. Now the vanguard thundered the battle-song of

David, "Cyfoded Duw, gwasgarer ei elynion; a fföed ei gaseion o'i flaen ef."

They sang, then ceased, and the rear-guard took up the chant: "When thou wentest forth before the people; when thou wentest through the wilderness, the earth shook and the heavens dropped." They sang on and ceased. Thereupon again the vanguard took up the strain, "Kings with their armies did flee, and were discomfited; and they of the household divided the spoil."

Thus chanting alternately, they marched through the passage among the mountains threaded by the Sarn Helen, and before the people went Pabo, wearing the bracelet of Maximus, the Roman Emperor, who took to wife that Helen who had made the road, and who was of the royal British race of Cunedda.

So they marched on—following the same course as that by which the Norman cavalcade had preceded them. And this was the Plygain in Dyfed in the year 1115.

The host came out between the portals of the hills at Llanwrda, and turned about and descended the Ystrad Towy, by the

right bank of the river ; and the daybreak of Christmas saw them opposite Llangadock. The grey light spread from behind the mighty ridge of Trichrug, and revealed the great fortified, lonely camp of Carn Gôch towering up, with its mighty walls of stone and the huge cairn that occupied the highest point within the enclosure.

They halted for a while, but for a while only, and then thrust along in the same order, and with the same resolution, intoning the same chant, on their way to Llandeilo. There they tarried for the night, and every house was opened to them, and on every hearth there was a girdle-cake for them.

On the morrow the whole body was again on the march. Meanwhile, the garrison had fled from Dynevor to Careg Cennen, and the men of Ystrad Towy were camped against that fortress, from which, on the news of the revolt, Gerald had escaped to Carmarthen.

By the time the men of Caio were within sight of this latter place, it was in flames.

And tidings came from Cardigan. The people there had with one acclaim declared

that they would have Griffith as their prince, and were besieging Strongbow's castle of Blaen-Porth.

But the men of Caio did not tarry at Carmarthen to assist in the taking of the castle. Only there did Pabo surrender the bracelet of Maxen to the Prince, with the message from his sister.

They pushed on their way.

Whither were they bound? Slowly, steadily, resolvedly on the track of those men who had outraced them to their place of retreat and defence, the bishop's Castle of Llawhaden.

Now when Bernard heard that all Caio was on the march, and came on unswervingly towards where he was behind strong walls and defended by mighty towers, then his heart failed him. He bade Rogier hold out, but for himself he mounted his mule, rode to Tenby Castle; nor rested there, but took ship and crossed the mouth of the Severn estuary to Bristol, whence he hastened to London, to lay the tidings before the King. And with him went Cadell, the chaplain.

It was evening when the host of Caio reached Llawhaden, and Rogier from the

walls heard the chant of the war-psalm. "God shall wound the head of his enemies: and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his wickedness . . . that thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies: and that the tongue of thy dogs may be red through the same."

He shuddered—a premonition of evil.

Pabo would have dissuaded his men from an immediate assault; but they were not weary, they were eager for the fray. They had cut down and were bearing faggots of wood and carried huge bundles of fern. Some faggots went into the moat, others were heaped against the gates. The episcopal barns were broken into, and all the straw brought forth.

Then flame was applied, and the draught carried the fire with a roar within.

By break of day Llawhaden Castle was in the hands of the men of Caio. They chased its garrison from every wall of defence; they were asked for, they gave no quarter. Those who had so long tyrannised over them lay in the



galleries, slain with the sword, or thrust through with spears. Only Rogier, hung by the neck, dangled from a beam thrust through an upper window.

CHAPTER XXV

THE WHITE SHIP

THE rebellion extended, castle after castle fell; those of the Normans who remained maintained themselves within fortresses, like Pembroke and Aberystwyth, that could receive provisions from the sea. Powys was seething—a thrill of excitement had run through Gwynedd, and the aged King there quaked lest his people should rise, dethrone him, and call on Griffith to reign over them, and combine north and south in one against the invader.

It was in the favour of the Welsh that King Henry was out of the country. He was warring against the French King in Normandy, and the malcontents in the duchy.

In order to punish the Welsh, he had sent Owen ap Cadogan at the head of a

body of men into the country. Owen was furious because the people of Cardigan had greeted Griffith as their prince. Cardigan was the kingdom to which Owen laid claim, but he had done nothing to maintain this claim against Strongbow. Yet no sooner did he hear that a cousin, Griffith ap Rhys, had been welcomed there as its deliverer and prince, than in uncontrolled rage he gathered a troop of ruffians, and aided by the men afforded him by King Henry, he invaded Dyfed, and took an oath that he would massacre every man, woman, and child he came across till he had cut his way and left a track of blood from the Usk to the Atlantic.

Thus a Welsh prince, with a mixed host of Welshmen and English, had come among the mountains that had cradled him to exterminate those of his own blood and tongue.

The horrors he committed, his remorseless savagery, sent men and women flying before him to the wastes and heaths of the Brecknock Mountains, and they carried with them the infirm and feeble, knowing well that Owen would spare neither the greybeard nor the infant.

Enraged at not finding more food for his sword, he marked his onward course with flame, destroying farms and homesteads.

An appointment was made for the host of Owen, another led by Robert Consul, and the disciplined foreigners under Gerald of Windsor, who had been reinforced from the sea—to converge and unite in one great army for the chastisement of South Wales.

It so happened, while thus marching, that Owen, with about a hundred men, detached himself from the main body to fall on and butcher a party of fugitives on their way to the fastnesses of the mountains. Returning with their plunder and their blades dripping with blood, Owen and his ruffians came near to where Gerald of Windsor was on his way.

Then up flamed the rage of the baron, and he resolved on using the opportunity to discharge a personal debt of honour. It was this Owen who had penetrated as a friend into Pembroke, and had carried off Gerald's wife, Nest.

At once he turned and fell on Owen and his murderous band, cut them to

pieces, and slew the man against whom he bore so bitter a grudge.

Henry had returned from Normandy; he was triumphant. Peace had been declared, and his son William had been invested with the duchy. The King hastened to Westminster as soon as he had landed, expecting his sons, William and Richard, and his daughter, Adela, to follow him in a day or two. As he was about to embark at Barfleur, there had come to him one Thomas FitzStephen, the son of the man who had conveyed the Conqueror to England. At his petition, Henry accorded him the favour of convoying the princes and the princess across the Channel in his splendid new vessel, the *White Ship*.

The crew, greatly elated at this honour, after having received their passengers on board, begged Prince William that he would order drink to be supplied them, and this he imprudently granted. A revel ensued, which was kept up even after the King and his fleet had put to sea. Owing to this, Henry arrived in England without the *White Ship* remaining in sight and forming a portion of the fleet. He was

not, however, in any concern, as the sea was calm and there was little wind, and he made his way at once to Windsor.

Almost immediately on his arrival, Nest appeared before him.

The King was in a bad humour. He was vexed at his children not having arrived. He was very angry because his porcupine was dead. The servant whose duty it was to attend to the natural rarities Henry collected, assured him that this death was due to the porcupine's licking himself like a cat, to keep himself clean, and he had accidentally swallowed one of his own quills, which had transfixed his heart.

"And, Sire," said the man; "when I saw him licking himself, I blessed Heaven, as I thought it to be a token of fair weather while your Majesty was crossing the sea."

"You should not have suffered him to lick himself," said the King angrily.

"Sire, I believed he was cleaning his spines, that he might present his best appearance to your Majesty."

"Take him away!" ordered Henry, addressing a man-at-arms, "and say he

is to receive fifty stripes at the pillory for his negligence. Well, what are you here for, Nest? This is a cursed bad augury on my return to find my porcupine dead and you here with a complaint."

"Sire," said the Princess, "at one time my presence was not of ill-augury to you."

"Times have changed. I am driven mad with rebellion. First in Normandy, then in Wales. One has no peace. But I have beaten down all opposition in the duchy, and now I shall turn my attention to your country. What do you want? To threaten and scold, as once before?"

"No—only to entreat."

"Oh, you women! you plead, and if you do not get what you ask, then you menace. What one of all your threats and denunciations has come true? What single one?"

"Oh, my Sovereign," said Nest, "hearken to me but this once. Now there is an occasion such as may not present itself again of pacifying Wales and making my dear people honour you and submit to your sceptre."

"What is that?"

"Owen ap Cadogan is dead. He

entered his native land slaying and laying waste, so that every Cymric heart trembled before him—some with fear, others with resentment. And now—he is dead, Gerald my husband, who had some wrong to redress——”

Henry burst into derisive laughter.

“Gerald killed him; and now the Welsh people hail him as having delivered them from their worst foe.”

“Then let them submit.”

“But, Sire and King, their wrongs are intolerable. Oh, let there be some holding of the hand. Lay not on them more burdens; meddle not further with their concerns. I speak to you now, not for the princes, but for the people.”

“It is well you speak not for the princes. The worst of all, a rebellious dragon, is your brother Griffith. Him I shall not spare.”

“I speak for the people. Sire, there is one truth they have taken to heart now by the fall of Owen. It is that given in Scripture: Put not your trust in princes! Those we have known have failed; and fail they all will, because they seek their own glory, and not the welfare of the

people. Our Cymri know this now. Griffith of Gwynedd and Owen of Cardigan have taught them that. Therefore, they are ready to bow under the sceptre of England, if that sceptre, in place of being used to stir up one prince against another, be laid on all to keep them in tranquillity. What my people seek is peace, protection, justice. Sire, you are mistaken if you believe that the Welsh people rise against the overlordship of your Crown. They rise because they can obtain no peace, no justice from the Norman adventurers sent among them, and no protection against their best lands being taken from them and given to Flemings. Sire, trust the people. Be just and generous to them. Protect them from those who would eat them up. All they rise for, fight for—are the eternal principles of justice as between man and man. Your men snatch from them their lands; their homes they are expelled from; even their churches are taken from them.”

“Ah, ha, Nest! I have the sanction of Heaven there. Did not your British Church resist Augustine? Does it not now oppose our See of Canterbury? And as

Heaven blesses the right and punishes the wrong, so has it marvellously interposed to silence evil tongues. When my Bernard was resisted, fire fell from heaven and consumed those who opposed him, in the sight of all men. I believe a hundred men were suddenly and instantaneously burnt."

"You heard that from Bernard."

"It has been published throughout England. I have spoken of it myself to the successor of the Apostles, to Pope Callixtus, at Rheims, and he was mightily gratified, for said he, 'I ever held that British Church to be tainted with heresy.' And he reminded me that when the British bishops opposed Augustine, they were massacred at Bangor. Which was very satisfactory. So now with my Bernard——"

"Bernard!" exclaimed Nest, boldly interrupting the King, "Bernard is an arch liar! Sire, a priest named Pabo struck the bishop in the mouth, and knocked out one or two of his teeth."

"I noticed this and rallied him on his whistling talk. But he said naught of the blow."

"It was so. And he pretends that Pabo was smitten by lightning for having thus struck him. But, Sire, I have seen this priest since the alleged miracle; his hair is unsinged. He has a hearty appetite, and good teeth—not one struck out by lightning—wherewith to consume his food. The smell of fire has not passed upon him."

The King broke into a roar of laughter.

"That is Bernard! Bernard to the life! A rogue in business. He cheated my Queen, and now tries to cheat me with a lie, and sets up as the favoured of Heaven. You are sure of it?"

"Quite sure; Bernard endeavoured to huddle the man out of the way lest the lie should be found out."

"Famous!" The King had recovered his good-humour. "And to see the solemnity and conviction of the Holy Father when he heard the story!" Again he exploded into laughter. "I must go tell the Queen. It is fun, it will put her in a passion."

"And, Sire! about my people—my poor Welsh people!"

"I will see to it. I will consider—what

did I hear? You have brought your young child with you?"

"Yes, Sire, he is without."

"Let me see him. Has he your beauty or Gerald's ugliness?"

"Your Majesty shall judge."

Nest went towards the door, but turned.

"Oh, Sire, forget not my entreaty for my people."

"Away—fetch the boy. I will think on it."

Nest left the room.

In the ante-chamber all present were in obvious consternation, pale, and dejected.

She had left her little son with a servant, and she crossed the chamber.

Then the Chancellor, who was present, came to her, drew her into the embrasure of a window, and spoke to her in low, awestruck tones. At his words her cheek blanched.

"None dare inform him," said the Chancellor. "We have instructed the child. Suffer him to enter alone and tell the tale."

For a moment Nest could not speak; something rose in her throat. She signed

to the boy to come to her. "Do you know what to say?"

"Yes, mother; that the *White Ship*——"

"Cast yourself at the King's feet, tell him all; and when you have said the last words, 'The princes, thy sons, be dead; thy daughter also, she likewise is dead'—then pause and say in a loud voice, 'Remember Wales!'"

The child was dismissed. He passed behind a curtain, then through the door into the royal presence.

All without stood hushed, trembling with emotion, hardly breathing, none looking on another.

Then, in the stillness, came a loud and piercing cry; a cry that cut to the hearts of such as heard it like a stiletto.

In another moment Henry staggered forth, blanched, as one drunk, with hands extended and lifted before his face, and in a harsh voice, like a madman's shriek, he cried, "It has come! The judgment of God! I am a dry and a branchless tree blasted in the midst of life—blasted in the hour of victory." Then he reeled to a table, threw himself on his knees, laid his head on his hands, and burst into tears.

None moved. None ventured near him. The Bishop of London was there—but he felt that no words of his were of avail now.

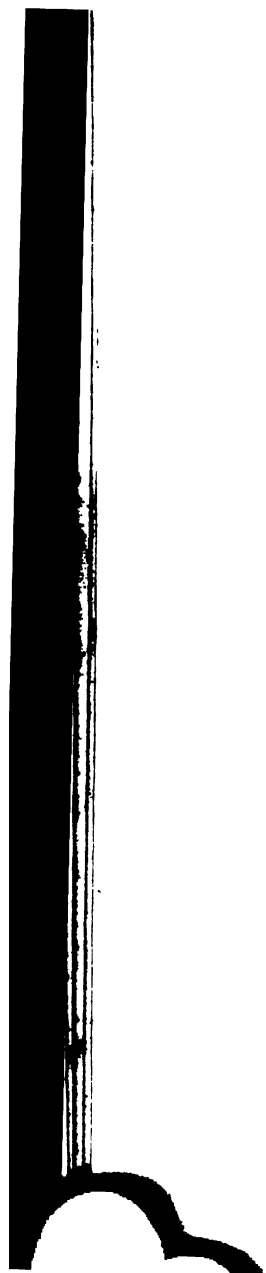
So they stood, hardly breathing, watching the stricken man, who quivered in the agony of his bereavement.

Presently he lifted his face—so altered as to be hardly recognisable, livid as that of a corpse, and running down with tears. He turned towards Nest and said, “Go, woman, go—it shall be as thou hast desired. I am judged.”

What had occurred needs but a few words of explanation.

When the *White Ship* started, the captain assured Prince William that such was her speed that she would overtake the King’s ship, and even pass it and leave behind the royal squadron. The signal was given, and the *White Ship* left the harbour, impelled to her utmost speed by fifty excited rowers ; but she had not proceeded far before she was driven violently against a reef, which stove in two planks of her starboard bow. Prince William was put into the boat, and was already on his way towards the land when, hearing the cries of his sister from the sinking





vessel, he ordered his rowers to put back and save her. He was obeyed; but on reaching the wreck such a rush was made by the frantic passengers to enter their boat that she was swamped, and the whole crowd was swallowed in the scarcely troubled sea. William and Richard, the two sons of Henry, and their sister Adela, and three hundred others, chiefly persons of exalted rank, perished on this occasion.

Nest returned to Wales.

She had gained all that she desired. She went at once to Dynevor. There was her brother Griffith, who had done much to restore the ruinous castle of his fathers, the Kings of Dyfed.

"Griffith," said she, "I have done what I could. For thee, free pardon and reinstatement in thy principality—yet is it not to be a kingdom, only as a great chiefdom. The King undertakes to suffer no more English or Normans to enter our country and carve out for themselves baronies therein. Nor will he send into it any more Flemings. But such as are here shall remain, and Norman, Fleming, and Welshman alike shall be under his sceptre, and be justly ruled, the English

by their own laws, the Welsh by those of Rhodric Dda." She looked round and saw Pabo, "And for thee—return thou to Caio and thy Archpriesthood—and to thy wife. Let Bernard look to it. The King will not forget the story of thy being consumed with fire from Heaven for having knocked out one of the bishop's teeth. And now, Griffith, give me the armlet of Maxen Wledig. We have both deserved well of our country."

THE END

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